THE ENGLISH REVIEW

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THE ENGLISH REVIEW

NEW SERIES JUNE, 1931 No. 1.

The Contents of this number include—

The Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P.
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Edmund Blunden
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Sir Ernest Benn
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T. S. ELIOT; B. H. LIDDELL HART; GEOFFREY DENNIS; F. YEATS BROWN; R. McNAIR SCOTT, Etc.

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ENGLISH REVIEW

25th Year of Publication

NEW SERIES — NO. 1

Edited by DOUGLAS JERROLD

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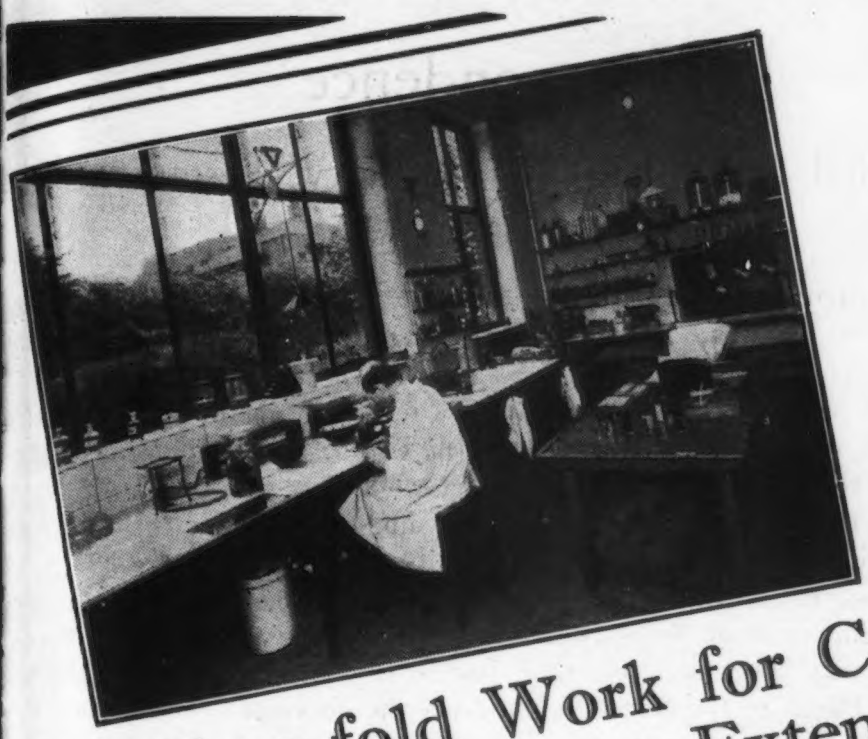

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Correspondence

"Marshal Foch and His Military Testament"

To the Editor of THE ENGLISH REVIEW.

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to an article in your May issue by Brigadier-General Morgan, K.C., entitled "Marshal Foch and his Military Testament."

This, whilst purporting to comment upon a review by me of Marshal Foch's Memoirs which appeared in a daily newspaper, is in reality nothing more than a violent and hysterical attack upon myself personally.

Concerning this attack I will say little. I am quite content to leave your readers to judge of the taste, logic and sentiments of the writer.

What I wrote in the review in question, and what I now repeat, sure that the overwhelming mass of British opinion is with me, is that Marshal Foch's Memoirs do a very great deal less than justice to the British Army. In his account of the Battle of the Marne, for instance, he does not even mention the B.E.F., still less describe the part it played in the victory. As for what he has to say concerning the First Battle of Ypres, his narrative, both in what it leaves out and in what it says, is a travesty of the facts.

In the article to which your contributor takes such exception, I quoted General Landon, who commanded the 1st Division during the Battle, a letter from whom protesting against Marshal Foch's version of the facts appeared in the Press at the time when the "Memoirs" were being published in serial form in a daily paper.

May I quote here this extract from General Landon's protest?

> "Whatever the distinguished Marshal may have thought about his having organized the defence of Ypres, and having sent French divisions to retrieve what he describes as the breaking of the British line and the starting of a retreat, nothing of this was known by those actually fighting and holding their own. . . .
>
> "The First Battle of Ypres was won alone by the indomitable bravery of the British Army . . . and not by any allied organization."

Many other similar letters of protest were also published.

I reiterate my opinion that Marshal Foch's Memoirs do not do justice to the British effort during the war. This opinion is shared by all the competent reviewers whose views on the book I have read in the leading newspapers. It is, however, true that to realize this it is necessary to have some military knowledge and also to have read the British Official History. It is evident that Brigadier-General Morgan, K.C., in spite of his military title, possesses neither of these qualifications.

(*Continued on page* vi)

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His article, apart from abuse of me, treats wildly and in extravagant terms of the Treaty of Locarno, which neither Foch in his Memoirs nor I in my review mentioned. The introduction of this subject however furnishes Brigadier-General Morgan, K.C., with an opportunity he has not been slow to take, of informing your readers of the many important people he has met from time to time, namely :—

Lord Lansdowne (a letter from).

Marshal Foch himself (notes by the Marshal predicting how, when and where the next war would come).

General Hoffmann (strategic confidences).

General Weygand (description of life at Headquarters).

General Nollet (tip as to what happened if you told Foch your troops were tired).

General Gouraud (on the " infusion of will " whatever that may mean).

Stresemann (dinner with).

After meeting so many military men and politicians it is small wonder that Brigadier-General Morgan, K.C., should feel qualified to deal with questions of military history.

As far as it is possible to find any motive or direction in the jumble of ideas and anecdotes of which his article is composed, I gather Brigadier-General Morgan, K.C.'s argument is that :—

(*a*) Marshal Foch was certain there would be another war.

(*b*) Brigadier-General Morgan, K.C., himself shares this view with fervour. Locarno, according to him, is but a " stupefying opiate " calculated to lull a credulous public.

(*c*) Ergo—it is wrong to criticize Marshal Foch in any way that may damage his prestige in British eyes.

I venture to disagree. If, as I contend, and in this I am supported by the opinion of those best qualified to judge, Marshal Foch's book does not do the British effort in the war full justice, it is extremely important to show where his account is misleading. It can only cause profound ill-will between France and ourselves that the French people should be induced to under-estimate and misunderstand the part we played in the war. So to mislead them has unfortunately been far too often the tendency in authoritative and important French books, notably those of General Gallieni and Colonel Huguet.

Furthermore, it seems to some of us to be a duty we owe to those of the old Army who never came back, to be jealously careful that the story of their achievements be truly told. Marshal Foch in his Memoirs tells the story of what he thought was happening at the time. My quarrel with his book is that the facts were not verified before his Memoirs were given to the world.

Yours faithfully,

E. L. SPEARS.

8 Little College St., Westminster, S.W.1.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

JUNE, 1931

Current Comments

The Future of the League.

LOVERS of peace and friends of the League will do well to talk less and to think more during the next few months. To cry hysterically that nothing but the League stands between Europe and war is merely to talk nonsense. The very few years since the League was founded have seen the renunciation by Western Europe for the first time for many generations of any attempt to maintain world peace, or even to protect European interests and lives outside their own borders. Within Western Europe, the will to peace generated by the sufferings of the Great War has given way to the gravest suspicion and nervousness. That is the clear and certain result of the post-war diplomacy in which the League has played so dominating a part. The first task of those who are anxious to restore peace outside and confidence inside Europe is to examine the causes of our failure, so far, in a frankly realistic spirit, and to stop talking schoolboy nonsense about hypothetical wars prevented by the League. History is full of the records of wars which have been avoided. The striking fact about the last thirteen years has been the unusual number of wars which have not been avoided and the terrible growth of national animosities.

The Cause of World Unrest.

THE cause of failure lies in the refusal of the press and the politicians to face the fact that the United States, Russia, China, India, Germany, Austria, Poland and Turkey certainly, and other countries probably, were and are determined to alter in their own favour the balance of forces as it existed in November 1918.

Naturally, all these countries would prefer to get what they want by peaceful means, and many have already succeeded in doing so by diplomatic means; others, however, have not hesitated to resort to force, and often with success. How has the post-war diplomacy faced this situation? The answer is that it has faced it by adopting the methods and aims of the pre-war diplomacy. It was not M. Poincaré or Marshal Foch who embodied most notably the pre-war mentality but our progressive politicians who have set to work over tea tables, in luxury hotels, and in sleeping cars to try and modify the present balance of forces by combined diplomatic action directed now against this, now against that Power. They have resuscitated in short the fatal policy of the old Empires of pre-war Europe, the policy of seeing how far they can go in the modification of the *status quo* without encountering that definite negative which, to-day as yesterday, means war.

The Conditions of Disarmament.

THIS simple fact explains the present world *malaise*. No nation is prepared to disarm in a world where every treaty is hypothetically under revision, where every guarantee is suspect, where red governments may succeed white, or white, red, at any moment in all the storm centres of Europe, and where the pink and grey politicians who sit uneasily on the top of the volcano find it necessary, in order to prove that they are really "red" or "white" *sans phrase*, to meet secretly every month and openly twice a year in pursuit of a persistent policy of aggression against treaty rights and national prerogatives. Aggression may seem a hard word. The answer to that is that aggression is a dangerous thing and is best described for what it is. The attempt to limit other people's navies in such a way as to alter the balance of sea power is an aggressive act. The attempt to alter the balance of military power as laid down by a treaty is an aggressive act. The attempt to alter a frontier is an

aggressive act. The incitement of other people's subjects to revolt is an aggressive act. The idea that the only aggressor is the man who fires a rifle is wholly false. History shows that rifles are usually fired as the last and only remaining defence against the aggression of politicians, financiers, prophets, priests and kings.

Playing with Fire.

THE so-called peace parties in Europe and America are, of course, well aware that they are playing with fire. Hence the frantic cry for disarmament. Remove the powder magazine, they say, and we can then play with fire as long as we like. To this argument there is a definite and conclusive reply. Disarm and keep your engagements, or break your engagements and keep your powder dry. We are not concerned at this point to argue the merits of the case. We are only concerned to induce people to face the facts. If treaties are scraps of paper, if international guarantees cannot be relied on, then no nation in its senses is going to disarm. And the matter goes deeper. As grave a challenge to peace as the attempt to end or mend the Versailles treaties is the growth of a new economic nationalism, threatening the gravest social and political results for many countries.

Old Desires: Modern Weapons.

THE use of the boycott and of dumping as weapons of political aggression is a new factor in world politics—no wonder that those who employ these weapons are foremost in their desire to see the disarmament of those against whom they are directed. Yet again, our unhappy age has seen the revival of religious and political fanaticism aiming directly and openly, under the inspiration of false and destructive philosophies, at the overthrow of churches and governments. At the very foundations, that is, of Christian society. Is it a coincidence that the chief disciple of these aggressive doctrines asks Western Europe, in the name of peace, to abolish at once all form

of military armament? Here, again, the issue is clear. If the League of Nations, acting corporately and with inflexible determination, is prepared to stand before the world as the champion of the existing social order, as the opponent of religious persecution and political and economic aggression, disarmament as far as the armies and navies of individual Powers are concerned can be substantially advanced. If not, it is waste of time for honourable men to go on discussing it.

The New Diplomacy at its Worst.

THE new diplomacy, with all its disruptive consequences, is nowhere worse displayed than over the attitude of Germany and Austria towards the Versailles and other treaties. No one, we imagine, defends the provision of the Versailles treaty forbidding an Austro-German political union. It is a natural, and, therefore, a proper re-grouping of historical forces. But it is a proceeding contrary to a treaty of which other provisions are of vital importance to France, to Poland and to ourselves. Is it the only revision contemplated? Far from it. The Polish frontier question is certainly to be raised sooner or later and the limitation of German military armaments is to be called in question immediately, with the declared object of making its continuance dependant on a further reduction of the French Army (already reduced by more than 66 per cent. since 1918, a reduction not voluntarily adopted by any other Power, naval or military, in the world). These policies are not compatible with disarmament.

A Service to India.

UNOFFICAL members of the Conservative Party have done good service to the country by calling public attention to the Indian situation. It was with even greater pleasure that we read an article by Lord Peel in the *Sunday Times* of May 17, which shows that despite the unfortunate wording of some of their speeches, the Con-

servative front bench are equally alive to the situation. Lord Peel rightly asks that the new Round Table Conference shall be invited to discuss a definite agenda which shall exclude from the list of debatable topics the question of safeguards and of the right to secede from the Empire. If the representatives of the Congress parties are really prepared to co-operate in drawing up and operating a constitution for India which provides adequate safeguards for just and effective government and the security of treaty rights and preserves India's place within the Empire, then we have reached an important stage on the road. If they are not, then we know where we are. So long as Congress imagines that we are ready to concede whatever they ask as long as they accompany their demand by threats, we shall neither govern India nor satisfy her legitimate expectations. It is our duty to do both.

The Impertinences of Politicians.

THE impertinent suggestion has been made that any unfavourable commentary on Mr. MacDonald's Indian policy is an act imperilling our rule in India. It reminds us of the equally impertinent suggestion, made at the time of the second reading of the defunct Education Bill, that the law should be invoked to prevent electors writing to their Member of Parliament and seeking to influence their votes. A study of recent election returns makes it clear that the public have other views, and the examples of other countries suggest that at no distant date they may enforce these views. The public have no use at all for the professional politicians. They will follow them loyally, and even eagerly, when public principles are at stake, but they have no intention of trusting them with a power of attorney over the British Empire or the Christian religion. If the present Government try to raise the issue of the professional politicians against the Peers (an issue popularly mis-described as

the Peers against the people) they will have a very rude awakening.

The New Party.

THE "New Party" made a not unsuccessful start at the Ashton election and probably cost the Labour Party the seat. It would be a mistake to underrate the appeal which Sir Oswald Mosley may make if he puts a large number of candidates into the field. It would be a graver mistake to over-estimate the amount of sense which lurks behind the fustian of his manifestos. The whole emphasis of Sir Oswald Mosley and his disciples is laid on the epithets with which their pronouncements are bespattered. Everything which they propose to do is to be "far-sighted," all advice which they take is to be "expert," all machinery which they set up is to be "efficient." But who are to supply the personnel?

An Unfinished Trifle.

(*With apologies to G.K.C.*)

Sir Oswald thought it rather rotten
That England should be quite forgotten
And so he got on a Committee
With some chaps out of the City.
The staff of the "Week End" Review
A motor King, and—something new—
Two critics from the B.B.C.
And all the other names-to-be . . . .

D. J.

The Budget: Failure and Fraud

By the Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P.

THE Budget of 1931–32 marks the final breakdown of a system of national finance which has held the field for the best part of a century. The dominating conception of that system was taxation for revenue only. The only permissible taxes were those which could not directly affect industry, whether to help or to hinder; in other words, consumption taxes on a few articles of general use like beer, spirits, tobacco, and tea, and direct taxes on realized profits. It was a system based on one great assumption—fundamental if it was to work successfully, but gradually forgotten—the assumption that the total amount to be raised was so small, relative to the income of all classes affected, as to have no serious indirect reactions upon industry. It must never be forgotten that when Free Trade was established in this country it was as part of a general national policy which confined the activities, and consequently the expenditure, of the State to the absolute minimum. With British industry, built up under protection to a state of efficiency and on a scale of production far outdistancing any possible rivals, and able to make the fullest use of the great era of expansion which followed the Californian and Australian gold discoveries, with income tax at 5d. (soon, it was hoped, to disappear altogether), with social reform regarded as a medieval conception wholly out of place in the modern competitive state, the effect of taxation on costs of production was practically negligible. Under conditions so simple and favourable Gladstone's budgets were really child's play.

From about 1880 a change begins to creep over the picture. The expansion of British industry is checked in every direction, first by tariffs in the markets of Western Europe and the United States, and presently all over the world, and even at home, by the competition of tariff-stimulated industries. Simultaneously expenditure begins to rise, partly on armaments, but even more on a whole

series of new social services not included in the philosophy of the Manchester school. The Budget expenditure, which in 1864–65 stood at £67,000,000, reached £91,000,000 in 1886–87, when Lord Randolph Churchill resigned over the Navy Estimates, and £199,000,000 by 1913–14. Local expenditure grew even more rapidly. Even before the war it was estimated that the total direct and indirect overhead on costs of production due to rates and taxes amounted to something like 10 per cent. It is significant that this aspect of the matter received comparatively little attention in all the discussions on fiscal policy in the pre-war period. Stress was, of course, frequently laid on the advantage of a tariff in broadening the basis of taxation. But the effect of our taxation on costs of production, and the preference given to foreign competitive imports by their not being subject to some countervailing charge, was a point to which little importance was assigned.

Then came the Great War. The total public expenditure, national and local (excluding Post Office expenditure), rose from 252 million pounds in 1913–14 to 1,312 million pounds in 1920–21. On the basis of 1913 wholesale prices this latter figure would have to be scaled down to 427 million pounds, that is to say, an increase of 70 per cent. over 1913–14. Even with that correction the figures obviously called for a fundamental reconsideration of the whole of our economic policy. That was the last thing of which anyone seemed to think. On the contrary, the one dominant idea after the war seems to have been "business as before 1914, only more so." Nobody could doubt but that the nation was poorer than in 1913. Yet the only conclusion which the public was prepared to accept was that so heroic a people deserved much more in the way of public expenditure. For nearly five years industry had expanded, vigorously if not always soundly, under the combined effect of an immense demand for munitions and war equipment, of drastic *de facto* protection, and of a colossal inflation. Yet bankers and politicians alike accepted it as axiomatic that we should return straight

away to free imports and get back as fast as possible to the gold standard and enable " the pound to look the dollar in the face."

Some deflation was, no doubt, necessary. But it is impossible to find any serious justification for the policy of exaggerated deflation which was pursued in the vain hope of restoring the financial world of 1914. That policy hit industry in every direction. It involved the reduction of credit when credit was needed for reconstruction and rationalization. Its effect upon our trade was to all intents and purposes to give a bounty to competing imports and to impose an extra tariff against our exports. Lastly it increased enormously the deadweight of all our debt, national, municipal and industrial. Under its influence, added to the heavy growth of expenditure on social services, the real weight of our taxation has gone up enormously since the war. By 1924–25 the burden of our public expenditure, while nominally 400 million pounds less than in 1920–21 was, in fact, nearly 30 per cent. heavier. By 1929–30 it was over 60 per cent. heavier. To-day, when the world slump has brought wholesale prices down to within six points or so of the pre-war level, our expenditure, standing as it does at well over 1,000 million pounds, constitutes a burden nearly two and a half times as great as the burden we were carrying in 1920–21, and four times as great as the burden we were carrying in 1913–14.

The whole conception with which our budgetary system set out was that its taxes, while representing a modest subtraction from the spending power of all classes, could not possibly affect costs of production. Direct taxes obviously could not do so as they were only tapped from profits after production had taken place. Nor was it conceivable that the thrifty income-tax payer of the Victorian era would meet any slight increase in them by reducing his investments rather than by cutting off some unnecessary luxury. Indirect taxes were largely optional, and so could not be passed on in the shape of insistence on

increased wages. So ran the theory, and as long as taxes remained below a certain level, it may to some extent have held good.

It certainly does not hold good to-day. Quite apart from the direct taxation of profits placed to reserve by industry, the ever progressive raising of income tax, surtax and death duties on the class from which the replacement of working capital mainly comes, cannot but have had a profound effect upon industry. In the case recently presented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the National Council of Industry and Commerce, it is calculated that industry has been directly deprived of capital by taxation to the tune of £1,668,000,000 over the twelve years ending 1930–31.

Assuming that on an average each worker requires £500 of capital to be at his disposal before he can earn wages, this means, so the memorandum points out, that 3,336,000 workers have been deprived of the opportunity of earning a wage. In so far, of course, as this money was required, not for new production, but for re-equipment, its withdrawal has meant a loss of competitive efficiency even more serious in its ultimate effect on employment. Moreover, the whole trend of our taxation has discouraged the desire for investment as well as reduced the amount available. There is little inducement to the rich man to invest what income the tax collector leaves him, in order that a third of the interest may be taken from him while he lives, and half of the investment itself be confiscated when he dies. Much better to get full value by spending it on untaxed luxuries.

These psychological influences weigh even more, perhaps, with the professional and small business man than with the wealthy capitalist. In his case, moreover, there is another factor which the simple mid-Victorian theory ignores: the determination to maintain a certain standard of living, and to pass extra burdens on by increasing his fees or his prices. This factor applies over a very wide range of income-tax payers to whom the tax is, after all,

like rent or any other expense, just an item of cost that has to be made good. It applies even more to the working man, both as regards so-called optional taxes and even more as regards such ineluctable taxes as rates, which raise his rent, and insurance stamps. In one way or another, whether by the withholding of capital or, in an even larger measure, by an increase of costs cumulatively transmitted and converging upon the factory, the mass of our taxation to-day is a direct addition to our costs of production.

It constitutes, in fact, a veiled excise upon production whose incidence, in the case of fully manufactured goods, may run up to as high as 25 per cent. or more. That is a situation never envisaged when this country adopted the policy of free imports and its present scheme of taxation. It was always part of the straitest Free Trade doctrine that an excise duty should be balanced by a corresponding customs duty. Such a precaution was obviously demanded, not only in fairness to the British producer, but in the interests of the revenue itself. From that point of view it is immaterial to what extent the imported foreign article has contributed to the revenue of its own country—the amount would in any event be far less than is levied on British production. What matters is the loss to the Exchequer by the displacement of revenue-yielding British production by non-revenue-yielding foreign production. The demands on the Exchequer, on the other hand, are in no respect diminished, but on the contrary increased by the necessity of sustaining, at the public expense, the workers who have been deprived of their employment. The rate of taxation has consequently to be raised on a reduced volume of British production, and the veiled excise on that production, the invisible protective tariff in favour of the foreign producer in our own market, is still further increased. It is a vicious circle in which the difficulties of the Exchequer and the handicap against the British producer are each progressively intensified. Imperceptible in its early stages its operation has acquired

such a momentum that British industry is now within sight of complete collapse under the intolerable burden which it has to carry, while the national finances are on the verge of bankruptcy.

Such is the situation with which Mr. Snowden was called upon to deal in his Budget. To understand his method of solving, or rather evading, the problem it is necessary to appreciate both the man and the circumstances of the moment. Mr. Snowden is a combination of very diverse qualities, one might almost say diverse personalities. Behind the acrid and contemptuous debater there is the kindly and lovable man whom friend and foe in Parliament have learnt to like as well as to respect, and whose gallant struggle against physical frailty and now against serious and painful illness, has evoked universal admiration. In his political outlook three quite distinct strands are interwoven. There is the fanatical believer in the present redress of social inequalities, and the eventual extirpation of capitalism, by ruthless taxation. There is the heir to all the Victorian Treasury traditions, keenly opposed to any and every form of expenditure and a passionate stickler for all the Treasury orthodoxies, more particularly for the adequacy of the Sinking Fund. There is—no less a survival from Victorian days—the doctrinaire Free Trader, in whose eyes Protection combines the sin against the Holy Ghost with a denial of the multiplication table.

In this curious trinity of Robespierre, Hicks-Beach and the late Lord Courtney, the two Victorian elements have latterly been in the ascendant, while the fanatic of revolution has been in cold storage, to the sad disappointment of many of his followers. Hicks-Beach-Snowden has firmly suppressed any plans Robespierre-Snowden may once have cherished for using such an emergency as the present to give capitalism its death blow, and has been mainly concerned, so far as party exigencies allowed, to temper the wind to the shorn lamb by refusing to impose any further direct taxation. The same Hicks-Beach-Snowden could never consent to a frank suspension of the Sinking Fund

as a way out of present difficulties. Courtney-Snowden vetoed implacably any escape in the direction of the obvious solution of the difficulty, the imposition of a tariff to counterbalance the burden of our veiled excise upon British production and to broaden the basis of our revenue. Within the limits of these various inhibitions there was really little left to do except to ask the Treasury officials to see whether they could not find some makeshift expedients to fill the gap, or raid some hen-roost that Mr. Churchill might have overlooked. The Budget of 1931–32 is their response.

On the revenue and expenditure side the first step was to reduce the inevitable deficit to a minimum. An estimate of revenue which only allows for less than £1,500,000 decrease over the whole field of direct and indirect taxation, and which, in particular, assumes an increase of nearly £7,500,000 from death duties, regardless of the immense shrinkage of all Stock Exchange values, and of £3,350,000 from stamp duties, can be explained on no other hypothesis. The expenditure side, on the other hand, has been kept down by ignoring all items, however certain to arise, which had not already been formally sanctioned. There is consequently no provision whatever for the additional expenditure, running certainly into many millions, which must result from the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance, whatever precise form those recommendations may take. Not even the cost, almost certainly underestimated at between £300,000 and £400,000, of the new Land Valuation is included; it is left to figure as one of those inevitable Supplementary Estimates which Mr. Snowden hopes to match by as yet undisclosed economies. Meanwhile it is worth noting that the minute surplus of £134,000 for which Mr. Snowden budgeted has already been absorbed, even before the introduction of the Finance Bill, by the decision to keep the airship R.100 in commission for research purposes.

Before even that exiguous and evanescent surplus could be declared there remained a gap of £37,500,000 to

be padded out somehow. The process is amazingly simple. Only to the tune of £7,500,000 is permanent provision made in the shape of an increase of 2d. a gallon on the petrol tax. In view of the recent fall in petrol prices it is difficult to quarrel very seriously with this step, though obviously it calls for an early reduction of the horse-power tax which at present weighs so unfairly upon British motor-car production and almost excludes it from many markets. It may well be asked, however, why on the same principles the no less heavy fall in sugar might not have justified some increase in the sugar duties. It is not unfair to assume that this was rejected because it would have been difficult to make such an increase without at the same time conceding some increase in the preference to save the West Indies and Mauritius from imminent disaster. The case would have been too overwhelming, and sooner than face it this obvious source of permanent revenue was left untapped.

There remained £30,000,000 to find. To meet the bulk of this Treasury ingenuity discovered a hen-roost unraided, possibly unraidable, earlier. A sum of £33,000,000 of money borrowed during the war has been earmarked ever since for the purpose of buying dollar exchange at favourable moments and so facilitating the discharge of our obligations in America. Claiming that recent arrangements, under which our foreign debtors now pay reparations and instalments of war debts into the Bank of International Settlements in dollars, have largely rendered this account unnecessary, Mr. Snowden announced that he proposed to transfer £20,000,000 of it to this year's revenue. This is, of course, simply another way of raiding the Sinking Fund, and the pretence that this money is being brought back for the purpose from America does not really affect the character of the transaction.

The last £10,000,000 were found by an adaptation of Mr. Churchill's ingenious expedient of rearranging the time of payment of taxes so as to get more into the current year, leaving the account to be righted at eternity. In this

case it was applied to a class whom Mr. Churchill, as he has himself stated since, had not the face to exploit in this way, the income tax payers under schedules B, D, and E. Instead of paying half their tax in January and half in July, they are to pay three-quarters in January and one quarter in July. This year's revenue will thereby be increased by £10,000,000. Next year's revenue will be unaffected. Theoretically the taxpayer may be said to be worse off only to the extent of the interest on one quarter of his income tax for six months. In the case of wealthy men with ample balances or elastic overdrafts this might mean little. But in the case of the majority of those affected, viz., the professional classes who live up to the margin of their incomes and are often not in a position to overdraw, this demand for a forced six months' loan, at the very moment when expenses are heaviest, amounts to a serious hardship.

The debt position has been evaded as ingenuously as the revenue position. Last year Mr. Snowden with a great parade of virtue announced that in future all deficits in any year were to be made good by subsequent taxation, and started on the straight and narrow path set for himself by charging £5,000,000 of the £14,500,000 deficit of 1929–30 to the budget of 1930–31, the remaining £9,500,000 to be made good in the next two years. A special windfall of £9,000,000 from the German Mobilization Loan has enabled him to claim that he is fulfilling this undertaking in another way. But as the 1930–31 deficit of £23,276,000 is not to be made good—all last year's good resolves, though embodied in the Finance Bill itself, having been quietly dropped—that is mere eyewash. The great purist of debt redemption has, in fact, abandoned all attempt even to pretend to do more than his much-abused predecessor, and the fixed debt charge for the year is now back to £355,000,000.

This result is arrived at by ignoring two factors. One, already mentioned, is the annexation of £20,000,000 of floating debt to revenue on the plea that it " is being

brought back from America." The other is the growing volume of the debt on the Uninsurance Fund—this slip of the pen is too good to be corrected! This debt, which now stands at £83,000,000, and is mounting up at the rate of £1,000,000 a week, may, nominally, be the debt of a self-contained fund. In fact it is a State obligation. There can be no question of any scheme for setting Unemployment Insurance on a proper insurance basis, whatever its character, taking over this obligation. Its present and prospective accumulation must be cleared off by the taxpayer, whether as debt or in part subsequently as an addition to current expenditure, as long as the present economic crisis continues. On this subject Mr. Snowden's own Controller of Finance, Sir Richard Hopkins, speaking with Mr. Snowden's authority and approval, declared in January last :—

> Continued State borrowing on the present vast scale without adequate provision for repayment by the Fund would quickly call in question the stability of the British financial system. This additional borrowing—for purposes other than productive—is now on a scale which in substance obliterates the effect of the Sinking Fund. Apart from the impairment of Government credit which such operations inevitably involve, these vast Treasury loans are coming to represent in effect State obligations at the expense of the future, and this is the ordinary and well recognized sign of an unbalanced Budget.

Last year's increase of the Uninsurance Debt, by £35,000,000, in fact, wiped out all but about £8,500,000 of debt redemption. In the coming year the increase of this debt is, in the opinion of the Treasury itself, likely to amount to £40,000,000–£45,000,000. This, together with the £20,000,000 transferred from loan account to current expenditure, means that, on balance, we shall this year be incurring debt and not paying off. In the circumstances of the country it is probably best that we should do so rather than impose fresh tax burdens on the present basis. Meanwhile, the palpable make-believe of maintaining the Sinking Fund is at any rate a tribute paid by the Snowden of 1931 to the ghost of his former austere and virtuous self.

To sum up. We have in this year of grace been brought

to the pass that we have, in fact, abandoned the effort to pay off debt, and are envisaging a deficit of £30,000,000 or more for next year without any attempt to provide permanent sources of revenue to meet that situation. Only a sudden wave of prosperity in the next few months can justify Mr. Snowden's estimates. Failing that most improbable eventuality, he will be faced next April with a situation far worse than that of to-day, with no hen-roosts left to raid, and with every argument that has forbidden the piling on of fresh direct taxation in this Budget immeasurably strengthened.

The Victorian system of finance has broken down under the strain imposed upon it, and come to a standstill. "Socialism in our time" is dead. Free Trade is defunct. But their corpses still cumber the ground, and Mr. Snowden sits by them hoping that a change of weather may bring them new life. But the barometer is still falling, and a sunny day will not resuscitate those who have once collapsed under a long and wasting disease. Nothing but a complete and fundamental change of our fiscal and financial system can now save us. And it must come quickly.

So much for the Budget of 1931–32 as a financial measure. Tacked on to it, purely as a political red herring, is a preposterous scheme of land taxation. Mr. Lloyd George's Land Taxes in 1909 did represent a real attempt to deal with two alleged and, in part, admitted evils: the excessive unearned increment of value pocketed by landowners as the result of the efforts of the community, and the withholding of land from its proper economic use by monopolists holding out for extortionate prices. They proved unworkable in practice and disastrous in their results, not because they were unnecessarily complicated, but because of the inherent complexity of the subject, and of the impossibility of analysing all the various factors that contribute to the value of a piece of property.

Mr. Snowden's new Land Values Tax has really little in common with Mr. Lloyd George's ingenious but abortive project except the word land. In that word, however,

lies its political value, for it enables the tax to be advocated by all the old arguments, wholly irrelevant though they may be, and to be supported by the mobilization of all the old prejudices against landowners and landlords. It does not, in fact, do anything to secure for the community its share of community-created values, but taxes equally the man whose land has been increased in value by his own efforts, the man whose land has increased in value by the efforts of others, and the man who has just paid in full for a value whether created by the vendor or by the community. It does nothing to make land cheaper, or to encourage its more profitable use, for to precisely the same extent as it makes it less valuable to the original possessor it makes it less desirable to a would-be purchaser. It is simply an additional income tax imposed on individuals who own land, based not on their actual incomes, but on the estimated value of their land.

As such it is a thoroughly unjust and vexatious imposition for which no justification can really be made on any grounds, whether of revenue or of political principle, unless penalizing the owning of land in order to facilitate ultimate nationalization can be called a principle. It is, in fact, a tax meant, not to be worked, but to be argued about, what Burke would have called " a tax of disputation." Its object is not to provide revenue or improve our land system, but to furnish a peg on which to hang speeches delivered from the soap-box. Conservatives will naturally concentrate on riddling it by their criticism in the House of Commons. In the country they will be well advised to remember the experience of 1909, and not to let themselves be deflected by undue attention to a purely make-believe measure, from their primary task of bringing home to the electorate the gravity of the general economic situation and the necessity for a constructive policy to save us from disaster.

Hail and Farewell

By Ernest Remnant

WITH this issue of THE ENGLISH REVIEW the editorship passes from me to Mr. Douglas Jerrold, who already for some time past has replaced me as the writer of the monthly Current Comments. A periodical of such compact compass as a Review establishes, or should establish, an almost personal relation between its editor, its contributors and its readers. After eight years of unbroken responsibility for the conduct of THE ENGLISH REVIEW, during which it has reached a circulation probably larger than that of any similar British periodical, a brief statement of the aims with which I embarked upon that task and the reasons why I am entrusting it to other hands may be of interest both to old and new readers.

After describing the dominant characteristic of English politics since the war as "confusion"—confusion of thought, of theories, of ideals—the inaugural article in June 1923 affirmed, "In this state of mental anarchy and of conflicting desires, the necessity is manifest for a clear voice and a definite basis of political belief." If I do not re-state the foundations of the political faith then declared and consistently maintained in this REVIEW ever since, it is not only because their exposition has been sufficiently unequivocal to leave old readers in no doubt as to their character (new readers will be more concerned with the future than with the past), but because I have the supreme satisfaction of knowing that in Mr. Douglas Jerrold I have a successor who will brilliantly uphold those same principles and is inspired by the same ideals.

In 1923 I believed that I could rely upon the help of my best and oldest friend, Harold Wyatt, or I should hardly have ventured to undertake the work of producing the REVIEW single-handed. But when, soon afterwards, he was stricken down by a fatal illness, it was difficult to abandon an enterprise already well launched, and I was obliged to carry on as best I could. Lately, the accumu-

lation of other responsibilities, together with illness, compelled consideration of relinquishing an ever more severe tax upon my time and health. Since 1926 I had, indeed, been fortunate in having the co-operation as literary editor of Mr. Vernon Rendall, whose judgment and fine scholarship have been of inestimable value. But when, twice within a period of a few months, serious operations in London and a French hospital required me to provide a page in the "make-up" for my own obituary notice (at the expense of one of Mr. Jerrold's notes) it seemed desirable to ensure the continued existence of the REVIEW under more reliable direction. Happily, the solution was not far to seek. I had already entrusted the editorial notes to Mr. Jerrold and was as sure of his talents and his purposes as I had been of Harold Wyatt. The printing has been done for some years with a high degree of technical excellence by the great firm of Eyre and Spottiswoode, of whose associated publishing company Mr. Jerrold is a director. His offer, therefore, to undertake the editorial and business responsibility and to take a share with the existing proprietors gave me both the relief which had become imperative and the assurance of continuity of policy. It remained only to realize an ambition that had long been in my mind: to gather to the support of the REVIEW a group of men of mark and achievement in public affairs, diplomacy, literature and industry, who by their counsel and writings would give it a status and prestige beyond the power of individual effort to attain. For, to quote again from the initiatory article in 1923, "To render real service in the pursuit of high ideals more is required than the mere expression of academic thought. Behind that must be living individuals, moved by enthusiasm and guided by reason."

Mr. Jerrold is happy in being able to rely upon the counsel and help of a number of distinguished men who in many fields of intellectual and executive activity have proved their devotion to high principle and the national

interest. And no one could make better use of such invaluable support. It would be ungracious in me if in congratulating Mr. Jerrold on thus starting under such bright auspices I failed to acknowledge the generous help I have myself received during the past eight years from contributors and correspondents both at home and in every part of the Empire. Their articles, information and letters of appreciation have encouraged me to persevere with a task which was often too heavy. Now, at last, I can relinquish it knowing that the effort has not been wasted but, on the contrary, a foundation laid upon which others may confidently build.

"Guided by reason"! When figs are gathered from thistles democracy, as we know it in the shape of universal suffrage, may be guided by reason. Democracy and rational rule are a contradiction in terms. Reason denies the possibility of wisdom being distilled from the collective votes of the overwhelming mass of the population, politically ignorant and apathetic, or stimulated to interest mainly by appeals to emotion or greed. Most of the legislation of the last thirty years has been flatly opposed to reason and can only lead to our ultimate undoing. Yet in a shameless race to satisfy the insatiable demands of a democratic electorate all parties have rivalled each other in auctioning the very sources of our national prosperity and Imperial greatness. Economic insanity undermines our industrial solvency, while cowardice of spirit masquerading as idealistic internationalism pulls stone after stone from the foundations of an Empire built by Englishmen seemingly of another breed. England and the Empire cannot survive another thirty years of such disintegration. The British lion will have become a toothless and decrepit symbol of vanished majesty. There is but one hope of escape from a fate inevitable if the necessity to pander to the ignorant herd results both in ever more shameless squandering of our resources and the gradual exclusion even of self-respecting candidates for Parliament.

A detached observer would probably doubt if there is much hope of such escape. Reason has clearly been unseated and has lost control. Democracy with the bit in its teeth is running away, apparently to destruction. It will be deaf to appeals to reason, till it crashes. Then it may yield—to the force of facts—and reason may have its chance to regain control. Disillusioned democracy may realize that it needs the best brains in the nation to pull it out of its mess. Reason backed by authority and discipline will find simpler means of choosing its rulers from the aristocracy of intellect and character. I am looking into the future. How far distant, none can say. But I have taken this opportunity of offering a very brief appendix to an article I published last October in this REVIEW, in response to many requests to complete the logical sequence of the views therein expressed.

Meanwhile, amidst the welter of muddled and unhealthy ideas with which the popular press bemuses the crowd, the lamp of reason will be kept alight only in a few of the daily and weekly papers and Reviews. I have tried to keep it burning in THE ENGLISH REVIEW for eight years, and I am sure that in none will its cold light shine more brightly in the years to come. *Ave atque vale.*

The Call to Adventure

By Henry W. Nevinson

WE may assume that every man is ashamed of refusing an adventure. In the course of a long and varied life, giving plenty of opportunity for adventure, I have refused three—one to go to the North Pole in a balloon with André (fair play to me, I was far away in Greece and did not get the invitation till much too late, so that doesn't really count); another to fly to the North Pole with Amundsen (the invitation came at short notice one cold morning before breakfast); the third to go to China in time of revolution (the invitation came to me in the Syrian desert between Bagdad and Beyrout, when I was worn out with fever). I seldom recall any adventure accomplished, but those three refusals shatter my spirit. The excuses go for nothing. The memory of the refusals is grievous, the burden of them is intolerable, and I have no doubt that every man who had let slip such opportunities would feel equally wretched for the rest of his life.

I say every *man*, for in the case of women the meaning of the word adventure obviously changes. A woman may in her heart regret having refused "an adventure," but she will not feel ashamed of the refusal, nor will she try to conceal it. Quite the contrary. And if anyone calls her "an adventuress" she is not pleased, no matter how exactly the word may suit her. A man would like to hear himself called adventurous, but even a man would not be pleased with "adventurer." Again, the word "venture" has a different shade of meaning. To "venture on thin ice," or in a motor driven by a friend does not imply an adventure; still less does the common silly phrase, "I venture to say" or "I venture to think," as used in our speeches and letters to the papers. Obviously the significance of "adventure" and "venture" is not simple. Let us try the words with examples.

There is, for instance, service in the army or navy, and in war. Does that service imply adventure? Our old

stand-by, Dr. Johnson, an authority on the use of words, seems to think it does :—

> We talked of war. *Johnson.* "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea." *Boswell.* "Lord Mansfield does not." *Johnson.* "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of General Officers and Admirals who had been in service he would shrink; he'd wish to creep under the table. . . No, Sir; were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me and hear a lecture in philosophy'; and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar'; a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal; yet it is strange. . . . The profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness."

Dr. Johnson thought every man should be ashamed of not being or having been a soldier or sailor in the service—so ashamed that even a Lord Chief Justice would wish to creep under the table in the presence of high officers. Much more, then, would ordinary men like me, and, indeed, I know the feeling well. In the war one heard a lot of scoffing about "brass hats" and "broody brigadiers," but before a "brass hat" I felt humbled, and before a General I was dumb. Before naval officers I was still more paralysed, though as a rule they are comparatively affable to strangers, and treat them as human beings, whereas one has to have shared a long period of danger—something like the siege of Ladysmith or the Dardanelles campaign—before a military officer will reveal a touch of common humanity.

I know the causes of my reverential attitude. Both naval and military officers have learnt a great deal of which I remain ignorant. The soldier knows a lot about horses, and probably rides as firmly united to his horse as a centaur. If he is a gunner, he has learnt a certain amount of mathematics, and in any branch of service he knows the elements of tactics and strategy. He can induce a platoon or a battalion or a brigade or an army corps or an army to move this way or that, and even

expose itself to deadly peril, by uttering a word or two. He has led the strenuous life, has probably played polo and shot tigers and made love. A fine tradition breathes from his very aspect, and in wartime he has been exposed to danger and hardship with his men, learning the true meaning of comradeship as no Socialist or even Bolshevik learns it. All this is true of the naval officer also, except that in place of a knowledge of horses one must assume a knowledge of ships, a subject of even greater difficulty and demanding longer experience. Even in peace-time the sailor lives in perpetual danger, and " the dignity of danger " is in his case increased, as Dr. Johnson would admit, because he lives in a prison with the risk of being drowned. To the dignity of danger I should add the dignity of solitude in the case of the captains of warships, for they are compelled by their dignity to have their meals alone.

So there are plenty of reasons why people like a Lord Chief Justice and myself should wish to escape under the table from the presence of naval and military officers. Having witnessed and shared in a good many wars, I now often ponder on the possibility of finding some substitute for war—some form of activity that would provide a similar exercise of skill, courage, self-sacrifice, and, above all, of comradeship. William James's noble idea of a general conscription for labour in the fields, the mines, the metalworks, the mills, the shops, and sewage-farms is the nearest I can get at present, and in our country the realization of that idea seems to be distant.

Yet, in spite of all these obvious advantages in army and navy service, I doubt if we should generalize so far as to call the service an adventure. Adventures may occur as special incidents, such as taking a redoubt or cutting a line of the enemy's fleet or blocking the port at Zeebrugge. But as a rule both services are too much matters of course, too much " all in the day's work " as affairs of routine, to call up the true spirit of adventure.

Like the army and the fleet, the miners, the firemen,

the crews of trawlers and fishing boats, to say nothing of the merchant ships, live dangerously. They hold their lives in their hands, and both hands open. Bob Smillie once told me that the average of violent deaths among coal-miners was three a day. The dignity of danger is always present, and yet I doubt if we should call any of these occupations adventurous. They, too, are pursued as a matter of course. A miner would laugh if you told him he was setting out upon an adventure every time the cage went down. So would the fisher if you said it when the steam trawler put to sea after the three days' coaling in port. Perhaps there must be something unexpected or unusual about an adventure. As to danger, I believe the average of people killed by traffic in London alone is about the same as the average of miners killed in the coalfields, and death on the streets is certainly unexpected. My friend Philip Gibbs called Fleet Street the "Street of Adventure," but that was not owing to the danger of "taking a walk down Fleet Street," possible and unexpected as death might be. Indeed, those childish words "Safety First!" which confront us now at every corner are enough in themselves to freeze the spirit of adventure to death and breed a race of lily-livered loons.

Perhaps that silly notice is itself an omen of approaching decay. Only last month a man who had lost large fragments of himself in adventure, told me the age of adventure was past, the spirit already dead. Putting that notice and his melancholy together, I felt depressed, like the mournful prognosticators who in Kipling's poem used to cry to each generation, "Farewell, Romance!" But, happening to take up that very day's papers, I read the headlines: "New Venture in the Himalayas; Kamet and the Climbers. An Adventure of Youth"; "British Feats by Land and Water"; "Kidston's Great Flight"; "Bulawayo in five days"; "First Air Mail to Australia"; "Kaye Don's Record to be Challenged." And a day or two later I read:

"England to Capetown in less than a Week"; and then, "New Australia Flight. Scott's Triumph. Record Beaten by Eighteen Hours." That, I thought, was not so bad, all within a week, and each of those exploits was or will be a true adventure All are touched by the dignity of danger. They do not follow routine as matters of course. They aim at high achievement worth the risk. And they take no thought of "Safety First!" Or think of Augustine Courtauld's true adventure in volunteering to remain alone through the dark winter on the Ice-cap of Greenland for scientific observation!

But when I mentioned these contradictions to my despondent friend, he replied: "You might have dragged in 'Our Amy,' too, if you hadn't already forgotten her. But I was not thinking of short-lived stunts like those, that pass and are forgotten. When once your plane is made and you have learnt to pull the sticks, there's nothing very adventurous in skimming over Central Africa. But you who have been there know what it must have been to struggle through it even eighty years ago—tangled forests, gulping swamps, waterless deserts, enormous rivers, snow-capped mountains, unendurable heat, various fevers, savage beasts, savage men, grotesquely deforming themselves and often filing their teeth into points to tear your flesh the better. That's what I mean by adventure, and the chance of it is going—going—gone!"

I was compelled to sympathize. To me also the most enviable kind of adventure is exploration. As a child I kept repeating to myself two lines of an old hymn: "Could I but find some cave unknown Where human foot had never trod!" The next two lines in the original ran: "Yet there I should not be alone, On every side there would be God." But I cared nothing for them; to me the first two were not a condition, but a prayer of longing. Everyone in the world still envies Robinson Crusoe. I suppose almost every boy shares my desire to penetrate some unknown land or sea. As Stevenson said,

every boy longs to discover buried treasure, and I still envy those two friends of mine, E. F. Knight and Frederick Pollock, who, inspired by a wild story told by an aged and fraudulent sailor at Plymouth, set off in a little yacht to dig a desert island off the mouth of the Amazon. They were almost eaten up by land-crabs, and they found nothing, for there was nothing there. But still I envy them that unknown, uninhabited rock.

Even to me the enjoyment of some exploration has been granted. But with every year the world diminishes and contracts. Railways, steamers, and aeroplanes are shrinking it together like a burst balloon. When I was born Africa was still the Unknown from which anything strange might be expected. When I walked into the interior less than thirty years ago, much was still uncharted and untrodden. But now a railway runs along my narrow track and through the forest jungles. What gave me months of effort and exciting decisions anyone, quite indifferent to adventure, could now jump through in a pair of torpid days and sleepy nights. I agree that the most enviable form of adventure is going—going—gone!

Only relics remain. Quite lately I was passing through Canada in one of those Canadian Pacific expresses that haul you away west over prairies now marked by rectangular tracks, over the high pass of the Rockies, and so gently down into the home-like climate of Columbia till Vancouver is reached. It was the depth of winter, and at one of those little stations with queer names—Woman River, Moose Jaw, or what not—I escaped from the steam-kippered train into the clutching air of 30 below zero. There came up to the station two powerful men covered with bits of fur, leather, and frieze. They had a rough-coated dog with them and were dragging a ten-foot sledge on runners. They had walked for miles over the snow through forests and over hills from a little hut built in the solitude, and here they had come to do a bit of shopping. Those were the true adventurers, about

the best I have known, though I have been among the Boers of the High Veldt and the Low.

How do these pioneers set about it? How do they begin and contrive to exist for the first years of summer and winter? I think of those Boers, for instance, whose children I found in south Angola, where their fathers had settled after a five years' trek from Cape Colony, living in their wagons and stopping on the way to sow and reap enough maize to carry on for a year and to dry enough buck and buffalo flesh as biltong. Of the same kind were the Backveldt Boers, like Kruger, whom I found in the old Transvaal. And, to go back still further, of the same adventurous kind was Abraham Lincoln's father, always pushing further into the wilderness; and of the same kind were all those families who in trails of wagons went pushing, pushing west beyond the Mississippi. Or think of those poor, gallant and dreary Pilgrim Fathers, who landed on an unknown bit of coast that they called Plymouth—barely forty families of them—and died in quantities, but lived with such resolution that they have populated all the Boston city and Massachusetts State that counts for anything! Yes, indeed, adventures were possible, were almost inevitable, in those happy times when existence was hard, but the world remained unknown, and life was variegated.

The adventure of killing savage beasts is going too, simply because the savage beasts will soon have gone. Their fate will involve the far finer adventure of revealing the beauty and habits of wild beasts and great birds by the camera and the cinematograph. I will not speak of adventures of the mind, as when people write books called "Adventures among Pictures," or "Adventures in Criticism." Those are not real adventures as George Meredith once angrily told me, when he lamented that his had not been an adventurous life. An adventure does demand the dignity of danger, and the authors of such books need fear little, even from the painters and writers among whom they venture.

But because the opportunity for adventure becomes more rare, shall we also agree with my friend that the desire for it is declining? When I observe our civilized habits or read the advertisements of patent medicines, I fear it. Nearly all of us, for instance, would say we envy the opportunity of sudden death; yet, when the extreme risk stands before us, we prefer, if possible, to walk in the opposite direction. Not so long ago a popular song cried, "Let me like a soldier fall!" but among shells and machine-guns, the singers hid behind a rock, as all of us would. We are always talking about health as the one universally interesting subject. We meditate on diet; we measure our exercise, and look forward to rolling in a bath-chair along a graduated path to death. We are prudent livers, existing, as it were, at half-cock, lest life should go off suddenly with a flash and a bang, leaving us nowhere. Possessed by what Matthew Arnold called "a bloodthirsty clinging to life," we seem to emulate those Struldbrugs or Immortals whom Gulliver discovered in Laputa. They could not die. Envy and impotent desires were their prevailing passions. They could never amuse themselves with reading, because their memory would not serve to carry them from the beginning of a sentence to the end. After about two hundred years they could not hold conversation with their neighbours, the mortals, because the language of the country was always in flux. When they saw a funeral they lamented and repined that others had gone to a harbour of rest at which they themselves never could hope to arrive. Yet, in our hearts most of us would choose to be immortal here on earth. Otherwise, why all this meticulous care of health? Why all the papers advertising cures, and the chemists' shops crammed with drugs for every ill?

But in spite of all these dismal evidences, I do not believe the natural passion for adventure has faded with the loss of much fine opportunity. A lot of humbug is talked about that ageing Peter Pan who could not

grow up, and I have often wished to goodness he would grow up and have done with it, or die. Yet when Dr. Creighton, the great Bishop of London, then Bishop of Peterborough, asked a boy in a Board School what he wanted to be, and the boy replied, "Please, sir, a pirate!" I was as delighted as the Bishop. And if for a moment I may be allowed to speak seriously, like one of the Elder Statesmen in Japan, I would say to the splendid youths who will have the joy of living so many decades after me: "Just listen a minute! In my long and varied life I have known glorious moments and hours of happiness. But far more glorious than any other have been the moments after escape from the peril of some adventure attempted and achieved for an object that appeared to myself worthy of all the risk. I have found nothing else in life to compare with such moments, nor will you find anything to compare. As to refusals of adventure, say 'Safety First!' and never refuse. For the better part of discretion is valour."

Both Ends of the Candle

By Sir Ernest J. P. Benn

IS anybody interested in the probable state of the country in, say, 1940 or 1950? The question is very much worth asking at a time when we appear to be giving all our thoughts to yesterday, to-day, and the day after. The most exhaustive search through the long catalogue of political proposals under discussion by all the parties fails to unearth anything but temporary palliatives for passing troubles. Nineteen-twentieths of all the legislation proposed is designed to correct the obvious errors of the legislation of the last few years, and nobody really doubts that the present efforts will all require revision or reversal within a year or two. In modern politics, we spot what we think to be a trouble, we rush to Parliament with what we think to be a remedy, and a few months or years later we are driven to further legislation to cover up the new trouble brought about by the attempt to cure the old. Hitherto it has been left for one Government to find out and pay for the follies of its predecessor, but we have now advanced to that point of proficiency in the political quick-change business where governmental follies come home to their own authors in a matter of weeks. The coal quota is a case in point.

The good business man is the one whose mind is working ten or twenty years ahead, whose every act is prompted by the desire to secure the future. The present is only of interest to him in so far as a better future can be built upon it. There is not a business in the land which could not be made to produce a bigger immediate return by going into liquidation. It cannot, therefore, be considered unreasonable to suggest to our politicians of all parties that they should, when making proposals for our good, consider themselves, and explain to us the probable effects of their proposals in a mere ten or twenty years' time.

The long view in politics was never so worth while or

so full of hope as it is to-day, because whereas our fathers were dealing with theories we have the advantage of practical experience. Those bold pioneers who started education or death duties, debt funding or wage regulation, were perforce obliged to rely upon abstract argument to support their proposals. We live in a world crammed full of actual and recent experience of every description of governmental device. Is it currency? We can turn to Austria, Germany, and France, as well as half the small countries of the world, and they between them will tell us with certainty all there is to know about the subject. Is it industrial and commercial restriction? Russia, Italy and Australia have all forgotten more about it than we ever knew, and yet we take very little trouble to profit from a knowledge of what they have done. Is it taxation? Half the countries of the world have gone up and down the scale and we content ourselves with a knowledge exclusively of the upward movement. It would appear as if we were determined that our politics should be as shallow as a Lansbury bathing pool and as artificial as work in a council office. The way in which people more capable than any previous people of understanding and discerning basic principles prefer to waste their time over such a subject as half-an-hour's work for a miner is pathetic. Not one moment's thought appears to be given to the position of a mine or a miner two or three years ahead, to say nothing of 1940 or 1950.

Hitherto we have lived and prospered on a well-understood and well-ordered plan of private enterprise and private property which could be taxed to provide the means of carrying on the business of government. That was the accepted position up to the death of Queen Victoria. Then we began to play with the idea that public ownership could replace private ownership, a notion encouraged by the prospect of private profits coming thus into the public purse in whole instead of in part. This theory has gained so much acceptance among

us that one political party is committed to the abolition of private property, and all political parties are actively engaged in its confiscation. We have reached the point where 40 per cent. of the total national income goes direct into the public purse, and where the whole of our private and public property is over-mortgaged as security for public debt. Our path along the road of public ownership has been far more rapid than most of us realize, but the discussion of the trumpery detail of day by day politics is so absorbing that we seem to be determined to ignore the larger issues. We cannot see the wood for the trees.

Gladstone took 5 per cent. of our national income for rates and taxes, and in 1930 they absorb 40 per cent. of all we earn. In 1900 our National Debt had behind it our private wealth amounting to nearly twenty times its total amount. To-day our public liabilities exceed the total of all that we own. Socialists ought to rejoice at the great strides made in the glorious work of destroying private property, others may be pardoned for taking another view. But both Socialists and others, if any of us care for the future at all, ought in justice to ourselves to enquire where either private income or public revenue is likely to be found a few years hence. No one can doubt that as we stand we are burning the candle at both ends. Were we building up substantial public revenues, or even the prospect of them, we could regard with equanimity the destruction of the foundations of private enterprise. But, in fact, we are as far removed as ever from any practical evidence to support the Socialist theory. From the complete communism of Russia all the way to our own experiments with sugar beet there is not one scrap of experience to uphold the notion that economic building can be done from the public purse. The credit balance is the basis of private enterprise and the debit balance the universal experience of public endeavour. So long as the public debits were amply covered by private credits the position was sound

enough, but now that everything we possess is in pawn, and nearly half the total earnings of the future pledged, the old problem of taxable capacity becomes the vital question of capacity to live at all.

For it should be noted, in parentheses, that while the absence of both property and revenue does not rob a nation of the means of maintaining existence if it can produce the whole of its own food, we are not in that happy position. Our property, and the use which the world has made of the credit and security which it engenders, have enabled us to maintain forty-five million people on soil that can feed no more than eight millions. When the Chinese or the Peruvian wakes up to the fact that the bill of exchange on London is drawn upon a bankrupt society, our plight will not be the mere inconvenience of a reconstruction such as any continental nation can face with comparative equanimity. Four out of five of us will at once become refugees seeking such shelter as we may be able to find on any foreign shore.

A single article, even in the generous columns of THE ENGLISH REVIEW, can do no more than indicate some one point in the fascinating study of public affairs. For instance, have we the brains, the sense of logic, the respect for our own intelligence, to ask ourselves and to know whether we are relying as of old on private enterprise or on public responsibility? The ugly truth is that not one in a thousand of us gives a single thought to the question, simple and vital and obvious though it be. In the meantime we grab at any passing advantage to be gained by either method and decline to enquire into the consequences.

The discussion would be more difficult if we were back in the old days when poverty, oppression and suffering were the excuses for political activity. Economic truth is apt to be clouded with sentiment when a woman is found in a coal mine or a negro is sold to a cotton planter. But having got the women out of the mines and having abated the rigours of the slave trade we

have moved rapidly to extremes in the other direction. Witness the following question, which was addressed to the President of the Board of Trade amid the cheers of the House of Commons :—

"Mr. Wise (for Sir James Sexton) : asked the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the failure of the firm of Arthur Wheeler & Co., and the consequent hardship imposed upon persons who have paid this firm for both War Loan and shares, but have received neither transfers nor certificates; and if he will call for a report from the official receiver and also devise means by legislation, or otherwise, to prevent outside dealers in stocks and shares from receiving payment before the delivery of stocks is concluded?"—*House of Commons Debates, March* 31st, 1931.

Here we see both ends of the candle positively flaring. A stockbroker carries on a business with the small surpluses of small investors, people who use their margins to make further gains and who, to a man, know without a doubt that if they gain others will lose. The wheel of fortune turns against them instead of against the others, and a Socialist member of Parliament demands that public action shall put the matter right. He does not suggest that the others should be made to lose; he only demands that the small investors shall have their gains. The proposal is, in fact, that the game of pitch and toss shall continue, but that the rules shall be "heads or tails I gain, tails or heads you win." The modern House of Commons thinks itself capable of legislating loss, trouble, effort, risk, endeavour, and even work out of the road of an indigent people obsessed with politics. The method is simplicity itself. If anybody makes a profit it is to be taken from him; if anybody makes a loss it is to be made good for him. The Royal Arms still leave the evil thinker with the consequences of his own thoughts, but the Parliamentary motto "Safety First" removes from everybody the smallest shred of responsibility for his own lack of ability or exertion. Anybody with fourpence can claim ninepence, and if by mischance the fourpence is not forthcoming the ninepence can always be "borrowed." If a house is missing it can be

supplied. If you have failed to provide for ill-health or old age you need have no regrets. If trade is bad it shall be safeguarded. If prices are unsatisfactory a Consumers' Council will lower them or a Trade Board raise them, as the cookery book says, "according to taste." If nobody wants your coal, the "quota" will force it on them; if, on the other hand, your order book is full up you must cancel some of your contracts and your men must be rationalized out of employment. Sir Ernest Gowers will see to that for £7,000 a year. If you require work, a labour exchange will find it for you, but if your customer wants to buy your work an inspector of shop hours will see that nothing of the kind takes place whenever he can prevent it. Should you be oppressed with war debts, German reparations will bring you relief, but if the German tries to pay, tariff walls will save you from the trouble of receiving his remittances. If local taxation proves too burdensome, you shall be derated, and you and your customers will pay still more in income tax.

Heads or tails, it makes no difference. There is always a legislative benefit awaiting your pleasure, and there is always a tax gatherer to provide the means. Thus, within the lifetime of most of those who read these lines, we have destroyed the work of a century. The flames are dangerously near the middle of the candle.

The role of mentor is not made easier by the fact that our standard of living is higher than ever and the lot of everybody somewhat better than before, but the responsibility thus put upon the thinking part of the population is all the heavier. As we have seen, a business can be made to produce immediate and bigger returns by the easy process of liquidation, the failure to provide reserves, the writing up of assets, the sale of fixtures, the mortgaging of future prospects and the disregard of all that spells stability.

Burning the candle at both ends undoubtedly produces

more light for a time. If that is what we are doing, or if there is even a suspicion of anything of that unwise nature about our actions or our thoughts, we owe it to ourselves to know it. And the way to get to know it is not really difficult. We have to do no more than to ask, in respect of each of our actions, what, so far as we can see, will be its effect upon ourselves and upon society in ten or twenty or thirty years' time.

Ultimate security, not immediate comfort, must be our aim.

Lines written in the Fields April 1931

So I have lived another year
  Who to myself seemed doomed to die,
And now the swallows dip and veer
  And I have heard the lambkins cry.
How strange it seems! Even now the bell
  Clangs for the fourth friend of my soul
For whom the spring was green last year.
  I did not think to hear it toll
    Mine and not his that jarring knell!

O Death I do not understand
  Is it a riddle or a jest?
If riddle, it is underhand
  To pose what never can be guessed;
If jest, the jest is overdry
  And better suited to the ear
Of Time to whom all springs are sand . . . .
  How doubtfully the swallows veer,
    How quaveringly the lambkins cry!

Robert Nichols

An Original Sinner

By Osbert Burdett

"WELL! my dear," said Angela, giving a last brush to her hair as she appeared in the undisguised beauty of her figure through the door of the bathroom, "well, in a week's time you will be married to Marjorie, and I hope that you will enjoy your matrimonial honeymoon with her as much as you have enjoyed your Eden-days with me."

While she slipped on a dressing-gown Arthur looked at her doubtfully. Was this, he asked himself, a catty remark? If so, it did not accord with his favourite conception of Angela, for he used to boast (to his two most intimate friends) that Angela was never catty: the only woman, in his experience, who was never spiteful, never cross. To avoid a reply, he slipped on some shoes, wrapped a flowered silk dressing-gown around him, brushed his hair, and rang the bell for their morning coffee.

The little flat had a wistful air now that the last week of their sojourn had started. He found a previously undiscovered sentiment for the curtains, the chair-covers, the furniture that he and Angela had chosen so gaily when, six months before, they had taken the place. At that time marriage with no one had entered into his thoughts. Angela had too many admirers of her wonderful figure to feel any desire to settle down. She was one of those happy people who live entirely in the present, and, if ever she ceased to be a woman of pleasure, no friend of hers could conceive her existing at all. She was tall, and slim, and dark. Her hair was almost a deep blue; and her eyes were so black and her lips were so naturally scarlet that people thought her painted when she was only pleased. Her occupation was to charm every man with whom she came into contact. She was helpless at everything else, but the luck of her lucky life was a private income of four hundred a year which her wise father, divining her temperament, had tied up so tightly

that there was no possibility of her touching the capital. It was also invested in home municipal stock, and Angela could never understand why her men-friends congratulated her upon this in the same breath as that in which they assured her that, invested in almost anything else, it would have brought to her a larger income. The peculiar virtue of this income, her friends told her, was that it was enough, so long as she eschewed a single life, to provide her with a maid, for Angela was so very untidy that it was the work of one person alone to pick up everything that she dropped upon the floor.

No doubt this little money, added to her personal attractions, would have made her an easy prey to selfish friends, if it had not also encouraged Angela herself to be fastidious. Independent by nature, she was never to be had for the asking, and, as she was also affectionate by nature, she never made the common mistake of her sisters, never allowed herself two friends at a time. Some of her richer admirers had begged her to marry them but she could never see what advantage she would gain by marriage. She thought, in her simple ignorance, that a wife was less powerful than a mistress, and freedom, especially the freedom of personal indulgence, was the breath of her nature. The idea of marriage was ineffably distasteful to Angela. She said that marriage turned all the men into grumpies and all the women into frumps. She was always bitter on the subject; and, of course, the men who, like Arthur, did not wish themselves to marry did nothing to dispel this prejudice of hers.

One day, as she and Arthur had been travelling by train into Waterloo Station after a pleasant week-end in Surrey, Angela, her eyes fixed upon the rows of grimy chimneypots that make this approach to London so depressing, suddenly directed his attention to these crowded little houses through the window of the carriage and exclaimed: "Oh, Arthur, isn't it dreadful to think of all these people living in open monogamy." The remark was passed on by the admiring Arthur; so easy

is it for a beautiful woman to gain a reputation for wit.

A healthy, idle, easy-going soul himself, Arthur thought Angela perfection. There had hardly been a passing cloud between them until Major Banks' letter had arrived. The letter said no more than that the major had returned on special leave from India, had brought back Marjorie with him, and would be pleased if Arthur would come and dine with them as early as he liked the following week. The letter was not sent to the flat, of which, somehow or other, neither Major Banks nor his daughter had heard. The letter found Arthur at his club, and it spoiled his luncheon.

The trouble was this. Major Banks was an old friend of Arthur's parents. Arthur had known Marjorie for several years, and it happened that, when he was on his way to Naples for a holiday a year ago, Arthur found himself, the major, and his daughter travelling by the same boat. These were destined for India, and the trio had but a fortnight together. On a ship, however, as everyone knows, much can happen in a fortnight, and, when Arthur left the vessel at Naples, he was aware that some sort of understanding with Marjorie had occurred. They had almost drifted into it, and the major had beamed on both so kindly that they knew that they had only to enjoy themselves for him to be thoroughly pleased. To do Arthur justice, he had scarcely known Angela then, and his first sensation after landing was that he had recovered his freedom once more. With the sea again between himself and Marjorie, he had thanked his stars that the voyage had not been prolonged, for he found that he did not miss her.

Indeed, when the post, a week or so later, brought him a letter from Alexandria, he recognized her handwriting with an inward grimace. It was rather an impulsive letter; the word "dearest" was disagreeably used, and it was a disappointment to Arthur to find that Marjorie, in spite of his absence, was still feeling precisely

as he had nearly felt the last evening that he had spent with her on board. Arthur was cautious by nature; at any rate the line of least resistance, which can look like caution, was his favourite attitude, so he put the letter aside and resolved to be in no hurry to answer it.

Unfortunately, Marjorie was not so patient.

Letters followed quick and fast. In fact, Arthur had to incur the expense of further travel and frequent change of his hotels in order to give colour to his later contention that most of them had never reached him. He trusted to time and distance; he continued to trust, in spite of the post. Then he began to relent, to feel sorry for Marjorie, whose only faults, he said, were innocence and impulse. He wrote a very careful letter, in which the only untrue statement was that he " looked forward " to seeing her again. As the major expected to be in India for three years, and as Arthur had not the smallest intention of visiting that unhealthy country, the prospect of their next meeting seemed safely remote. By this time Angela had crossed his horizon, and Arthur had only to compare his feelings for her with the emotions aroused by Marjorie to be certain that he never could have liked Marjorie in earnest. As usual, Arthur let matters drift, and Angela kept him so busy that he had no time to give to other things.

He knew too many people in town to think of concealing himself from the major, and resolved to go to dinner, casually and as a matter of course.

When he arrived at the house he learned that the major was alone. The major was not usually alone, but there was nothing to do but enter. Arthur had been received with a charming smile, and was thankful to find that the conversation turned on general topics.

" Marjorie is dying to see you," was the only direct allusion by the major to the past.

A few minutes later the door opened, and Marjorie's elder sister and her husband came in. This was a relief to Arthur, who had been led to expect no other guests.

The four were talking gaily when a scrimmage was heard at the door. It opened like a whirlwind, and Marjorie, radiant and impulsive to a degree he had never imagined, ran toward the group, flung her arms around Arthur, and, in a voice of agonized delight, exclaimed, "dearest, dearest, at last, at last! In her irrepressible delight, she kissed him several times before, covered with blushes, she appeared to realize that they were not alone. Arthur was so dumbfounded that, when everyone hastened to congratulate him, he had not had the nerve to reply.

When he had told Angela about it the same evening, she laughed till he could have wrung her neck. Then she became very serious indeed, and called the incident the "most brazen piece of intimidation" that she had ever heard.

"Witnesses, nothing, were forgotten," she declared in her most acid tones. "Arthur, you will be beneath contempt if you don't face everything rather than back out of it."

Arthur agreed, but did nothing. When Angela tnreatened to make his life a burden unless he extricated himself, he looked at her lovingly.

"You wouldn't know how," he said.

She was not to be coaxed, however, and, when she continued to press him, he had in the end to own up.

"You are right, and I am wrong, as sometimes happens. I ought to fight them, but I can't. I am naturally lazy; besides, I am an Englishman, and what Englishman has ever had an ounce of moral courage?"

Angela looked at him, for the first time with contempt. A woman herself, she had no romantic illusions about chivalry; none about girlish innocence; none, even, about the moral courage of her men-friends.

"Well," she said at last, "If you don't break off this thing before it comes to marriage, I will break it for you afterwards; and no one either shall have the chance to say that I have done it in order to get you back again;

for once you are married, whatever happens, I shall have done with you."

Arthur, already sadly reduced in spirits, was unable to respond to this. He said nothing. Angela added nothing. The subject had never been alluded to by either of them again. It was this which had caused him to meditate over the tone of Angela's voice when she had issued from her bathroom, as beautiful as Aphrodite walking up the beach. How much he had admired her for letting events take their inevitable course without another word! Angela really was the perfection of tact and companionship.

The last week passed all too soon, and such time as Arthur could snatch from his future bride was spent with Angela in a mood of desperate affection. She showed signs of a passionate tenderness unlike any he had known hitherto. From being as beautiful as an animal and as amusing as a merry child, she became (as it were) spiritually mature, an altogether deeper creature than the young woman of yesterday. Her heart, coming clearly to the surface, lent a radiance to her face, and Arthur, turned for the time being into a connoisseur by love, found that even the shadow of grief and anxiety in her became an added beauty, as a passing cloud or the spray of a tree will give by its shadow an added beauty to a summer day. Even physically Angela seemed to be enriched, transfigured by a depth of emotion that her sunny simple self had wanted hitherto.

One evening, as he was admiring the contrast of her skin (a skin of the palest amber, as if in her girlhood it had been soaked in the southern sun) against the sofa covered in black satin upon which he delighted to see her stretched with the contentment of a musing cat, he said:

"Angela, your figure is like a melody in muscle. From shoulder to hip, from hip to knee, from knee to ankle, it is a line of rhythm. What shall I do, whatever shall I do, when in a week's time I shall long for a sight of it in vain?"

Angela stretched herself.

"On the one hand"—she made a gesture with her fingers—"is an ounce of moral courage; on the other—there is me! If you haven't the pluck, you don't deserve sympathy. I see you," she added with malicious exaggeration, "spending all your married life upon the *shrink*. Don't talk to me of ankles or of long legs. Any fool can admire those. You bore me."

Arthur left his chair, knelt on the floor beside her sofa, and covered her arm with kisses.

"It is the arm that I love best," he said. "Why, Angela, you have even a beautiful elbow, and a beautiful knee and elbow are the rarest bodily beauties of all."

She held out her arm, and looked at it meditatively:

"Is the wrist ever appreciated enough, do you think?"

Arthur could have kissed her but for laughing. He loved people to be serious about beautiful things.

The memory of that last evening, which seemed to have stamped the contours of her figure indelibly upon his brain, so that he had only to shut his eyes in order to evoke them, carried him through the ceremony, which appeared to him as unreal as a nightmare: a mad illusion that would break. He acted his part with the composure of an automaton, and found, even on his honeymoon, that Marjorie did not seem to expect anything else. Innocence to this extent was new to his experience, and he determined that it should never ripen through any activity of his own. Marjorie appeared content to have won him, and his one consolation was her readiness to accept him in the part of an elder and graver brother. He found that endearing speeches seemed almost all that she appeared to require, and her volubility of endearment excused some contrast of reserve in himself.

They spent their honeymoon in France, and returned to a little house in Knightsbridge which the major had generously presented to his daughter. By this time Arthur had begun to be bored by Marjorie's society, but

the only way in which he could escape from it was to take her about. She had been brought up so strictly at home by her father that she was eager to enjoy society, and Arthur welcomed every invitation which promised a party so that he might, for an hour or an evening, loose himself from her in a crowd. Unfortunately, she was incapable of solitude, and would never let him go anywhere alone. Since her upbringing had not made it easy for her to make many friends of her own age, Arthur had to introduce her to his own circle, but not, of course, to that inmost circle wherein he and Angela had moved. He refused, however, to abandon his club, for it now had the advantage for him that no women were, in any circumstances, admitted. This matter of the club was his first battleground with Marjorie, but, as her father had one with the similar good old rule, she was defeated without much difficulty.

The months passed. Arthur's spirits began to revive after this successful little act of self-assertion; and, having maintained his club, he began to create the custom of spending two evenings a week in it regularly. It was another little step toward freedom that Marjorie could not easily defeat. She found that clubs were the privilege of husbands, though that husbands should have privileges, she felt, was undemocratic and strange.

Arthur also discovered another way of occupying her.

All her life Marjorie had been accustomed to live with governesses, and luckily the major, a widower, had not approved of modern ways. He believed that all studies should be serious, all literature above everything discreet, so that Marjorie had been taught political economy, political history, and was acquainted with English literature through such writers as Goldsmith, Miss Mitford, and Charlotte Young. With these, alas, Arthur was less familiar, so, as Marjorie was one of those girls who are willing to read without expecting any inward excitement from their reading, Arthur decided to constitute himself her governess and to prescribe a course of

innocent English authors. Marjorie read very slowly, Arthur very fast, so in an hour he was able to run through a book that would occupy her for a couple of evenings. When she had finished a book, he would question her upon it, and she was so used to being schooled by grave elders that this seemed but a continuation of her accustomed life. A new field was opened to Arthur when he placed Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and then Mrs. Gatty's "Parables from Nature" in her hand. On the same course he found Charles Kingsley's "Madam How and Lady Why" invaluable. He and his wife agreed that they would be wasting their time upon modern writers.

Arthur feared that this diversion could not last, and wondered whether he could occupy her with church bazaars and charitable agencies. He must find out which churches and which charities were still in what he called the Mrs. Gaskell age. His own past, his real life and interests, he was determined should remain a sealed book to Marjorie. Anything that might open her eyes, might make her less content with an elder brother, must be kept rigidly out of sight. Infant-welfare work, he fancied, was somehow akin to birth-control, and this word he would never allow to be uttered in his house. The greatest care was necessary, but on the whole he had made a fair start.

One evening, when their married life had lasted some five months, he took her to a party. It was to the house of the Bassetts, and it promised to be a great crowd. Edmund Bassett was an assistant something or other at one of the Ministries in Whitehall, a gentleman who beguiled his leisure with occasional very finished contributions to the highest type of literary reviews. Arthur and he had been at school together, but, finding him a trifle serious, Arthur's pleasures had not allowed him to see Bassett very regularly. Now this seriousness became a qualification for introducing Mrs. Arthur to the Bassett house. Edmund was what is called a "conservative critic," and Arthur felt sure that under his roof Marjorie

would not be endangered by new ideas. Bassett, of course, knew a number of people, but apparently only people who could be admitted to the outer fringes of Whitehall.

When Arthur and Marjorie arrived, the rooms were already filling. The names of the guests, as they were announced, were exactly as Arthur had foreseen. Other Civil Servants, appropriately grave, doctors with reputations made or in the making, a few soldiers, a few young diplomats, an archdeacon who wrote popular books, some people vaguely connected with the *Times*, some architects, an editor or two, and, by all the gods, an actress, a dancer, some actors and an impresario. Arthur steered Marjorie safely away from these, but the rooms became very crowded and everyone, except himself and Marjorie, seemed to know everybody else. Arthur had to hurry Marjorie away, more than once, for ices, lest she, too, should catch some fragments of conversation that he had overheard. The crowd around the further buffet was only less dense than elsewhere, for there were two buffets, and the company seemed to divide itself instinctively into its more and its less serious group. Arthur had noticed the fission, and had followed the archdeacon's gaiters. It was pleasant to find elbow-room behind the archdeacon in front of the long table, glistening with glass and coloured sandwiches, forks, and different shades of wine- and cider-cups. People helped themselves and then withdrew, leaving a comparatively vacant space in front of the table.

While Arthur was leaning across it to pass a plate of caviare to his wife, he heard his name called. A hand was laid upon his shoulder, and, before he had time to recover himself, Angela was smiling into his face. She held out her hand, and said:

"Well, my dear Arthur, how are you? It seems some time since we met."

Dismay, fury, rebellion, shame and love made it impossible for Arthur to reply. He did not take the

proffered hand, but, struggling to control himself, turned to Marjorie, saying huskily:

"Marjorie, let us go home."

But Angela barred their path, and, in a voice that everyone could hear, exclaimed:

"Arthur, you don't seem to know me with my clothes on."

There was a frightful pause, then she added sweetly:

"Won't you introduce me to your wife?"

Angela did not wait to be refused, but after imperceptible pause, she turned aside with perfect composure, joined a woman friend who was near at hand, and left the room knowing that, as she had promised him, the fat was safely in the fire.

What is Conservatism?

By Douglas Jerrold

THE question at the head of this article is not an easy one to answer, yet it has to be answered not in the interests of any class, or any party, but of our whole society. So long as educated opinion believes that conservatism is merely a polite name for the opposition to reform, events will continue to move in the present direction, whether we like it or not.

It is sometimes argued that it is a function of conservatism to retard "progress." This is folly. If conservatism has nothing better to do than to delay the scientific application of collectivism to our present industrial chaos, thus prolonging the present dis-equilibrium; if it has nothing better to do in world politics than to find formulæ which will enable us to pay lip-service to the principles of the old world-order while acquiescing tacitly in the establishment of the new; if it has no more serious concern for the Christian social system than to express the pious hope that its overthrow will be unaccompanied by force; if these things represent the contribution of conservatism to our generation, conservatism is not merely a poor thing, but an evil thing.

The civilized social order rests on three indefeasible principles: the integrity of the family, the secular authority of governments, and the primacy of the spiritual in the world order. It demands the unquestioning acceptance of a hierarchy of "goods," the good of the social unit, which is the family; the good of the community here and now; and the ultimate good of man *in sæcula sæculorum*. It is firmly and necessarily based on the principle of the responsibility of the individual to himself, to his neighbour and to God. This responsibility is necessary to the secular, moral and spiritual welfare of man and cannot be denied without social consequences of the most disastrous kind. Alike on earth and hereafter, character is destiny. The secular and spiritual aims of society are here, on this fundamental point, at one. The

aim is to breed good men; not happy men, or advanced men, or super-men, but good men. The means, in the sphere of the temporal, are the responsibilities imposed by the natural social unit, the family, and the natural social aggregate, the nation. Both the unit and the aggregate exist in the natural order, and cannot be modified in their essential nature. The family is the natural compromise between the desires of the flesh and the capacity of man to gratify them without injustice to his neighbour. The nation is the necessary compromise between the natural claims of race and the natural need for government.

These compromises have been tardily achieved. They represent the secular stages on the road to man's redemption. Perfect man was without desire and without the need of government. Man in recorded time has been divided against himself, and without the grace of God, a house divided against itself cannot stand. It has taken only 140 years from the declaration of the rights of man to plunge the world into chaos.

Why? Because modern social science has substituted for the task of buttressing and purifying the institutions necessary to the progress of man (man who was made a little lower than the angels to be crowned with honour and glory), the organization of the interests corresponding to man's desires. As employers, as distributors, as doctors, as lawyers, as skilled or unskilled workers, we are all organized to-day in the line of our selfish interests. The result, the inevitable result, is a struggle between interests for the control of the machinery of government. Thus the modern educational problem becomes a struggle between doctors and the teachers and the employers and the unemployed for the possession of the children. The doctors think that every thing should be subordinated to the health of the child; the teachers to the good of education as such; the employers regard the children only as potential employees and the trades unionists as potential contributors to the unemployment fund.

Now there is one class of people who have a greater interest in the children than any other, and who have been left out of this. These are the parents. The modern state has no use for parents; is it surprising that its contribution to the problem of parenthood in our characteristic new age is to urge that children should not be brought into the world? And why not? How can a man permitted to sow on condition that he does not reap maintain a family? How can a man refused permission by his fellows to work up to his capacity bring children into the world? How can producers forbidden to accumulate reserves, taxed in direct proportion to the men they employ, forced to work at the dictation of trades unions seeking only and frankly the immediate good of their members, produce for an expanding population?

The deliberate perversion of the natural instincts is, indeed, the necessary task of the builders of this new age, who are preparing, in the name of progress, a sombre cemetery for the hopes of mankind. Logic can only proclaim the wisdom of the alliance between our progressive politicians and the advocates of divorce, birth control and sterilization.

Finally, how can a society which denies by its organization and teaching the primacy of the spiritual, how can our European society which has constituted itself before the whole world the apostle of its own apostasy, call in the name of justice and mercy, let alone in the name of the religion of Christ, for the sacrifices necessary if any order at all is to be preserved outside its boundaries? "Everything is quiet in Mexico" I read a few months ago in one of our leading Sunday papers, "indeed, the only incident reported is the burning of a church with its congregation." It would be interesting to know some of the incidents which were not reported.

Unfortunately, it matters very little. Abend, the Chinese correspondent of the *New York Times*, in his book "Tortured China," has told the truth about China.

Such incidents as that in Mexico figure on every page. No one cares. China has signed the Kellogg pact; and murder, rapine, and anarchy are secondary affairs. The death of millions by starvation is a secondary affair. The closing of missionary schools does not matter at all. What is important is that Western education is being introduced into the great continent, and that children from six to eight are being taught that they are descended from the beasts, and from eight to thirteen that there is no morality and no God. With these stirring messages going out from the West to the awakening East who can doubt that the future of China is bright indeed? No one, apparently, except the late Dr. Sun Yat Sen, whose impassioned appeal to the world to save China from herself has been suppressed by the common consent of Eastern and Western politicians. Abend, after writing his book, has returned to Shanghai where he will probably be murdered, as Putnam Weale was murdered. Another secondary affair?

Of course, if our religion is a vague and sloppy humanitarianism—if we really believe, in spite of the shocking accumulation of evidence to the contrary, that man is the incarnation of an immanent and progressive God—that man is naturally good—then let us do as others do, ascribe all the evils we see around us to chance, and continue to drift peacefully in anticipation of the millennium. But before we decide on this easy and complacent belief let us realize what we are doing. To hold such a belief is to fly in the face of experience, to defy logic and to reject reason in favour of blind credulity. To attempt a rational defence for this simple faith it is necessary to falsify every fact of human history and to invent a prehistory for which there is not a shred of evidence.

Man in his earliest manifestation is *man*; he has left the sign-manual of the creative artist on the walls of his earliest dwelling-place, hewn out of the rock thousands of years before the earliest known civilization. The very earliest record which modern science gives us

of living man shows him to be more than the beasts. As to what happened before that remote epoch, we have only hypothesis. All we can say is that popular science, in its effort to escape from God, has been forced back on the unprovable assumption of the spontaneous generation of life from matter, an alternative which, inexplicable itself, explains nothing. So much for pre-history.

As for history, there is simply nothing to be said. The story of man in historical time is the story of the growth, maturity, and decline of successive and sometimes contemporary civilizations. And in the wake of each civilization comes the dominating fact of history, the doom of depopulation which falls, inevitably it may seem, on all societies which have flourished greatly. Little wonder that those who wish to talk nonsense about man's potentialities have preferred to ignore history and to talk nonsense instead about man's origins.

To consider and analyse these perversions of science and history is not to-day an academic exercise; it is a practical necessity. Every legislative panacea of the years since 1910 has been based on the assumption of man's natural tendency to progress in the right direction. It doesn't matter discouraging thrift, because man is naturally thrifty. It doesn't matter rewarding idleness, because man is naturally industrious. It doesn't matter imposing a toll of burdens on industry which must automatically increase every year because trade naturally expands. It doesn't matter making divorce cheap and easy because men are naturally moral. It doesn't matter secularizing the State because men are naturally virtuous.

To-day the task of Conservatism in challenging these false and demoralizing doctrines is assisted by the growing reaction from the false history and pseudo-science on which collectivism necessarily depends. We have still, however, to meet the very frequent argument of those who, refusing to look below the surface of things, defend their complacency by talking of the " basic fact " of our immense material progress.

Yet the answer to this is simple. When we see vast tracts of territory—much more than half the area and population of the world—dissolving into anarchy; when we see the persecution of religion beginning again; when we see men being taught to look not to God's mercy and their own efforts but to the State's disbursement of other people's money for their livelihood; when we see these things, we are quite wrong to be impressed by the information that some men are better clothed, fed, housed than ever before. Any individual and any society by treating their capital as revenue can raise their standard of living to almost any degree. The result is a twofold disaster: the capital is dissipated, and the moral energy necessary to its re-accumulation is dissipated by the same process. By precisely these causes Athens fell, and Rome, and Spain. The only difference is that while they frittered away the capital looted from foreign conquests, we are looting the savings of our grandfathers and mortgaging the assets of our children.

And even at that dishonouring price, the story of material progress is not true for many races and districts: it is ludicrously false in Russia, in China, in South Wales, in Lancashire and in Northumberland. And it happens as a mere matter of economic fact that the prosperity of England greatly depends on the prosperity of these districts and countries. But let us ignore all this. Let us admit, with thankfulness even for temporary mercies, that we are a better-housed, better-fed and happier people than in 1900, if we except the depressed industries and districts, and let us see to what conclusions the facts lead us.

Is it our experience that material progress (to the very limited extent to which it is fact and not fiction) has produced the results necessary if mass government is not to end in disaster? Is it our experience that the diffusion of information, the increase in leisure, the increase in travel, the increase in comfort and health

have, in fact, widened our minds, heightened our emotions, sublimated our desires, intensified our energies and concentrated our thoughts? Or is it, on the other hand, our experience that disinterested, just, and efficient action does not survive the curious desires of democracies?

Can you govern an empire from Whitehall, or direct the operation of fleets in action from an office? Can you preserve thrift under the eyes of the thriftless, or the rewards of audacity to the audacious? Does the vast extension of our horizon by disinterested men increase their pre-eminence in the public esteem over the public entertainers and the sensation-producers, the time-server and the sycophant? Does the scholar, once at the erratic mercy of a rich patron, now study at his ease preserved from want by the homage of the world? Does the disinterested administrator, once hampered by fear of an ignorant and selfish public opinion, now pursue justice with perfect assurance, confident that the wider public before which he stands can be relied on to set justice before expediency and honour before ease? Do the men and women of Europe, now vocal and conscious of their power, turn their backs on the temptations that have assailed kings and courtiers, do they impose upon the world those standards of Christian virtue so often flouted in high places? Do they put aside the license of the past and the things of the flesh? Do they shut the door on ambition and greed and envy, and preach from the housetops the duty of disinterested service? Do they, for the first time in history, place others above themselves? Do the new democracies of Australia, of the United States and of South America set a new standard of public virtue and of private morality and of resolute and self-sacrificing integrity? Finally, does the new publicly-educated body of citizens manifest a steady and growing interest in the things of the mind and spirit. Where one copy of a work of literature, or piety, or scholarship was sold fifty years ago, do we sell fifty to-day? Or even two?

Or even one? Has even the one just man survived the onrush of standardized claptrap? Let us answer this question by another. Is there an honest man in the country who would dare to give any but a negative answer to each of these questions?

So much for the practical results of material progress. The latest model in motor cars, rushing out of control towards a precipice, is an advance on the stage coach, but for that reason it will merely reach disaster quicker than a stage coach in a similar case. The complex machinery of modern finance and mass production can provide for a larger population with less effort than our forefathers needed to provide for a population barely as great as that of Australia to-day. But it is as dependent as ever on the men behind the machines, on their virtue, intelligence and self-denial. Or, to put it another way, in the older times we added two and two; to-day we add four and four, but we are no more able than our forefathers to escape from the discipline of arithmetic. Out of our abundance we can make eight where they made four. But neither our diminished piety nor our superabundant wit can make four and four into nine.

Conservatism demands that we take a realist instead of a romantic view of man's achievement, that we take reason and not faith as our guide as to man's potentialities. Analysis will show that every one of the dogmas of the progressive politician rests on an assumption about progress which is at variance with the observed facts. Popular education, for instance. It may be a good and wholesome thing to make education free and compulsory, though we have reached the heights of bedlam folly when we prevent our best stocks from educating their own children in order to give to others a bribe to induce them to allow their children to be educated for nothing. This, however, is by the way. Let us admit the principle within reasonable limits; what remains is to be honest about the results. These have been extremely mixed, and have resulted, by a chain of cause and effect which

no one foresaw, in a substantial debasement of culture. To anyone over forty, the growth of mass hysteria, the decline in standards of decency and taste, the concentration of energy on the essentially frivolous, is a definitely disquieting feature of the day. This is no argument against equality of educational opportunity. It is not even necessarily an argument against compulsory universal education up to a considerable age. It is an irrefutable argument against the view that in a society organized as ours is, education can be relied on to provide the only necessary insurance against human folly and greed. In other times, man could learn from the hard school of life what his schoolmasters and his books failed to teach him. That essential correction is denied to him to-day. The schoolmen taught that prudence was the great moral virtue on which man's well-being depended. We have driven prudence from the state.

We have a clear choice of alternatives. We can breed a race of drones, or we can breed men.

That is where Conservatism joins issue with Liberalism, for the root principle of Conservatism is to breed good men, not rich men. It may be cheaper economically to get all our food from overseas, but the life of the countryside breeds virtues which are all important. The strength of France lies not in the wealth but in the ingrained prudence of her peasantry. Not even the most demagogic politician in France would dare to put before the French peasantry a policy damaging to thrift and self-reliance; if he did so he would be offering an affront to their instinctive conception of dignity and justice.

So it is with much social reform. The Liberal, realizing that poverty as such is uneconomic, will seek to relieve it by public assistance. The Conservative, looking not to men's means but to their character, will find the true cure for poverty not by relieving of their responsibilities, but by insisting on their being allowed to discharge them. To-day, we are near the end of our tether.

We allow employers to be dictated to by other interests, and so relieve them of the responsibility of employing. We allow goods produced in a free labour market to compete with goods produced in a protected labour market, and remedy the situation by allowing our own working classes the right not to work. We throw men and women out of employment by a continuous process of legislation and taxation, and are driven to maintain them in sickness and health and their widows after them. No party and no class has failed to draw lavish drafts on the bottomless purse of the taxpayer, and to mortgage the wealth of the future in the interests of a system which is destroying not the bodies, but the mind and soul of our times.

There is grave practical reason, but in theory no ground at all for pessimism. We can maintain and even improve our standard of living if we intensify our effort, but we shall never begin to do so until we have restored fearlessly and ruthlessly the normal incentives to effort and the just rewards of effort. And even these incentives and rewards will fail unless we recapture the inspiration of deeper loyalties. The primacy of the spiritual is the condition of material progress. The inspiration to sacrifice and the courage to suffer and endure must be born again. For the blind and credulous faith that vague forces called science and scientific administration will relieve our children from paying the debt we are heaping on them, we must substitute the belief in justice, which demands that as men sow so shall they reap. It is not Christianity but Pagan humanitarianism which breeds the belief in the miraculous which is the curse of our age. The time has come to meet our enemies at the gate with high courage and without fear of the consequences. Let us begin by telling the truth about man, his nature, and his achievement; let us go on to build constructively and without fear on the sure foundations which these truths give us.

That is the task of Conservatism. In the world

order it will stand for justice. It will realize that every surrender to force derogates from the world respect for justice and leads inevitably to the abrogation of the rule of law. It will realize that events are irresistibly compelled by men's attitude to them. "Settlements" reached at the price of sacrificing just interests may show an immediate balance of advantage, but the blow to the self-respect of states and individuals has to be paid for. You cannot put loyalty to principle in the second place without sapping those qualities of resolution and energy which are the life-blood of nations. Incidentally, the immediate declared object, the maintenance of peace, will never be attained. It is the decline, not the rise, of nations which leads to war.

This leads directly to the second note by which Conservatism must be known. It will not be afraid of defining and acting upon moral principles. It will deny wholly the modern view that right and wrong are subjective, that law is merely an expression of numbers, and morality, in Mr. Aldous Huxley's shockingly complacent phrase, a statistical fact. Conservatism must therefore, in first place, set itself firmly against restrictive legislation of the kind which confuses morality with sectarian puritanism. To prevent decent and Christian people having a glass of beer or buying a box of chocolates or bathing from the beach is wantonly to destroy the respect for the real standards of integrity by confusing public opinion and bringing the legitimate and necessary authority of government into contempt. On the other hand, a State whose Government leaves it to a handful of private members to ensure that religious education is not directly penalized by its legislation, has ceased to pursue the first end of a Christian State without having even the courage to enforce an alternative morality.

The third note of Conservatism will be the criticism of all legislative proposals by reference to their effect on the character of the individual, and his ability to discharge his responsibilities to his family. Conservatism will

turn its back for ever on the old criteria, in imposing taxation, of administrative convenience, or simplicity of collection. Of course it is easier to collect from a few rich men than from a larger number of the well-to-do. But is it just or prudent? Injustice and imprudence are expensive habits. Conservatism will stand firmly for the right of every individual to work his hardest, as a principle just as sacred as the right of a man to enjoy the fruits of his labours. It will not shrink from the administrative difficulties involved in enforcing a just division of business profits among all who have contributed to them. It will not shrink from the unpopularity of denying a share to those who have not.

Constructively, therefore, Conservatism will enter the list as the resolute and inflexible opponent of those "interests," whether capitalist, labour, educational, professional or scientific which are fighting to-day to capture the governmental machine and to place the community in bondage.

The war between institutions and interests is the fundamental conflict of the modern world. There is much loose and ignorant talk to-day of over-production. The actual fact is that the modern State, at the bidding, first of this, then of that, interest, has already nearly bankrupted the great producing organizations—textile, iron and steel, coal, engineering and shipping—on which the continuance of any production at all necessarily depends. The war of interests has been carried so far that the body over which they are contending is dead. This sober fact is being concealed from a bemused electorate; it will be revealed by the merciless logic of events. Whether it is revealed by the final destruction of our commercial supremacy, or in time to rebuild it to greater heights on the firm foundation of the gospel of individual character, energy, and self-reliance will depend on the extent to which the Conservative Party fights without compromise for conservative principles.

The Book of the Month*

By Edmund Blunden

WE go to foreign countries, and amuse ourselves with their paradoxes of life and character; we produce long books about them; but we have at home paradoxes enough. Perhaps the most striking of these is that the nation of shopkeepers is also the nation of poets. At no period has the Englishman been so deeply engaged in establishing great works, trade routes, and future wars as to fail to hear a wild music, or a gentle one, haunting his course. But will he admit it? How hard it is in England to detect the man who loves and maybe writes poetry! Even those who are celebrated for their verse, when you see them or correspond with them, seldom appear to be concerned in the matter. They are usually as well aware of the best train and the worst tax as the next man. They cannot be caught by the stranger in the act of writing down their inner thoughts. Now and then arises a Wordsworth or a Tennyson who silently agrees that one or two poets should stand forth as public representatives of their vocation. But a multitude of Englishmen quietly, behind the screen, respond to their poetical opportunities and contribute to the pleasure of future readers as if " by stealth."

To know anything like the extent and variety of poetical expression in England—I had better say in English, for from north and west innumerable voices have joined in the harmony—means a lifetime of attentiveness to books both common and uncommon. There is no anthology, no series which is a substitute for that development of reading experience. We even have poets of the purest ray who can only be approached through the files of periodicals. If ever a man was a lyrical master, it was Henry Kingsley—and where is an edition

*" The Mercury Book of Verse." Being a selection of Poems published in the *London Mercury*, 1919–30. With an introduction by Sir Henry Newbolt. (Macmillan.)

of his poems? But there are other poets who put forth books and are scarcely more easy of access. How precariously is Ebenezer Jones's ardent fantasy and intellectual passion preserved! Governing this theme, some observations of F. T. Palgrave in the Preface to the "Golden Treasury" of 1861 never lose their truth and force: "Throughout this vast and pathetic array of Singers now silent, few have been honoured with the name Poet, and have not possessed a skill in words, a sympathy with beauty, a tenderness of feeling, or seriousness in reflection, which render their works, although never perhaps attaining that loftier and finer excellence here required, better worth reading than much of what fills the scanty hours that most men spare for self-improvement, or for pleasure in any of its more elevated and permanent forms."

There must be those living who purchased or received Palgrave's selection in the year 1861, and I should be much surprised if they felt that there had been during the seventy years any great alteration in the general capacity and inclination of the Englishman for poetry. That is to say, the number of unassuming and individual writers of verse has been maintained with little difference from decade to decade. The supply of genuine occasional poems, and small collections with their especial air and touch, has not failed. Sometimes, the nature, honour and aim of poetry have been obscured by artificial and external confusion. Too much talking round the subject has been known; reputations have been worked up, more to be regarded in sorrow than in anger; and, though it may come awkwardly from one whose own work has often been issued in signed and limited editions, the rage for luxurious bibliographical rarities has been a dangerous atmosphere to all but the most innocent or the most wise of poets.

To which enthusiast in poetry during the past fifteen years have the public looked for the regular defence of poetry more than to Mr. J. C. Squire? So

cordially and unselfishly has he placed himself at the service of versemen that his own poetical gifts have been partially overlooked of late. His *London Mercury*, now twelve years old, has from the first number given opportunity to poets known and unknown. Indeed, his desire to display new verse month by month has not escaped censure, for many persons with an intense feeling for poetry are impatient of failure and imperfection in it, and would rather see nothing printed at all if masterpieces are not to be had. But there are many kinds of excellence and animation in poetry, as in painting, and this problem of masterpieces is not a brief one. In any event, the liberal sympathy of Mr. Squire in poetry, no matter whether this or that application of it seems to be wasted, has already justified itself. Poem after poem which in a tumultuous time of uncertainties has come forth with the grace and glory of certainty, and has been generally recognized as an achievement, makes the *London Mercury* an anthology in itself. (The only disadvantage is the size of the periodical which Mr. Squire decided upon; lordly indeed, but most obsolete! The country groans with the burden of the *London Mercury* physically considered. Readers who would do anything but die for contemporary literature survey their flats and the big and growing battalions of that Magazine, and await defeat.)

A smaller anthology based on this spacious one, which will be ransacked in days to come by the succeeding harvesters of new corn from old fields, has just been published. "The Mercury Book of Verse" represents 106 writers. Whenever an anthologist ceases work and hands his compilation to another mortal the procedure is that the recipient calculates the omitted names. I am sure I hear this happening in several quarters on the present occasion; but shall I begin it? After all, the anthologist here simply could not "o'erleap all bounds." If —— and —— were not in the *London Mercury*, that was the end of his anxiety. It is a pity

that —— and —— were not there, but we shall ask one word on that deficiency in private. The dates of the anthology being from 1919 to 1930, several of the youngest poets have lifted up their voices just too late for the performance.

Let me take my way through this arrangement of modern poems, commenting at random. Mr. Colleer Abbott has the first page. He is the biographer of George Darley, and like Darley seems destined to be read by a limited audience, yet appreciative. His work belongs mainly to East Anglia (to give it a local habitation) and has the sharp, slightly grotesque characteristics of that region. Brilliant boughs start out of the flinty ruin, once an abbey, now a stackyard wall. Mr. Abbott uses a certain non-rhyme even which seems natural to his province, harsh to the stranger; and through his poetry one is conscious of a grim spirit of field labour. Mr. J. R. Ackerley follows, with the poem "Ghosts." The author of "Prisoners of War" is skilled to play upon human relations; may yet give us many poems combining their subtlety with lucidity of verse. I am not sure that the poems in this book convey a proper impression of the work—non-atomic—of Professor Andrade, but they do suggest the musical and spiritual brightness which he can create. Mr. Martin Armstrong is represented better. It is familiar now, this full-foliaged grove of his poetry, with its deep shadows and murmurs, its pools of sunshine and blossom. He can surround the high theme with full ceremony.

If anyone recently has written a ghost into his verse it is Mr. Archibald Campbell in "The Panic" here; a poem almost perfect, and full of natural and impressive hints, that lead the listener into a vivid co-presence. I say "almost perfect"; the last stanza has a sign or two of the passing of the inspiration. Mr. A. E. Coppard has something here especially for me—his "Unfortunate Miller." Do I mistake in feeling that he, too, at the close of this fascinating ballad, loses something of the spirit

which had brought him through? The naturalness of the tale is unimprovable, but the ironical after-piece seems strained in its promptness. Mr. Coppard is a poet with extraordinary command of what is "in the air" in a scene. He does not need many words to communicate that. I have not forgotten "The Horse," and wish it might have been in the volume before me.

This is an exceedingly pleasant poem by Mr. F. V. Follett on "Cobbett in Wiltshire." It reminds one incidentally that the poetry of the *London Mercury* has been mainly of a kind to sweeten and not embitter life. Mr. Follett has certainly made the "Rural Rides" yield a golden flower. Miss Stella Gibbons, when she sent the *London Mercury* the poem called "Coverings," did not exactly increase the philanthropic verse of the time, but she had painted in words the most vivid portrait of a snake that I have read. He is a glorious beast for ever. There is a snake in the book too as D. H. Lawrence knew him; that serpent, however, is not so much there for his own radiant heraldry as for the means of autobiographical homily. Of poems on the War, the anthologist includes not many, but such as are poems indeed. Mr. Mottram probably wrote his most beautiful verses in "The Flower of Battle," that mysterious vision of the Western Front at night, and the sky of year after year burning bright with the signs of fate; his poem is one more instance of the simplicity with which imagination transfigures common fact.

But I see that I have so far, in spite of my lengthiness, mentioned no more than ten of the 106 poets from whom this collection comes; and among the remaining 96 are names which will carry me still further out of my critical depth—almost all the names that would be sought for with practical certainty. I must leave my design for the annotators of future editions to take over. And yet I wished to remark on one feature of the collection which declares the wise direction of the *London Mercury's* poetical pages as clearly as does the number of illustrious

poems now gathered from them. I mean, the editor has always been friendly to light-heartedness in rhyme, and has helped greatly to unseat the solemnity of this bright period. Here, at least, we have felt that verse need not always be fixing bayonets and charging up icy mountains or down psychological excavations. There has been a hymn for Sundays and a farce for Saturday nights; more accurately, we have been treated to the prettiest toys, like Mr. Eric Linklater's "Faithless Shepherd," and artful amusements, like the epigrams of Mr. Belloc, Mr. Priestley, and others. Mr. Collin Ellis has given us one or two that might have come out of old Quarles, or Allingham's "Blackberries."

The legend is that poets are doomed to cold neglect in England—no doubt colder in Greenland; yet on the whole they do not come off too badly. The written, or at least the printed word, receives a considerable amount of sunshine, as in the *London Mercury* and in this selection from it, which depicts in warm colours the present condition of English verse, from the most eloquent to the most intimate kind. The paradox from which these paragraphs led out is still extant; but after all there is a constant supply of poetry among us which is not expressed in words and in anthologies. In the windows of our shops, in the interiors of our houses, in our cottage gardens and our ancestral ones (where these have been, like Venice, "preserved" hitherto, God help us all!), in bird sanctuaries and in public parks, in conduct, in study, in recreation, in invention, overhead and on the ground, individually and collectively, one may see the sensitive and imaginative achievements of poets who do not write verse. And for these, too, Mr. J. C. Squire's review has been vigilant.

Foreign Affairs

By Sir Charles Petrie

IT would be impossible to exaggerate the seriousness of recent events in Spain, for if they have any meaning at all it is that the unhappy country is well on the way to the disaster which has overtaken Russia. That the second phase of the Revolution should be anti-clerical is no mere coincidence, as its apologists would have us believe, for at least a fortnight before the rioting began Moscow instructed its agents that the chief obstacle to the establishment of a Communist regime in Spain was the Church, and that it must therefore be the first object of attack. In effect, the destruction of ecclesiastical property and the harrying of nuns is but one stage in the execution of a comprehensive plan which has as its ultimate goal the establishment of a Soviet Republic on the Russian model. The means employed are precisely the same as those which proved so successful fourteen years ago. First of all the so-called "moderates" are supported in the overthrow of the monarchy; then, when the mob has become accustomed to pillage and riot, it is turned against the other bulwarks of the existing order, namely, property, civil and religious, and the police; and, finally, when these have been destroyed, the way is clear for the final triumph of the extremists. At the moment the second phase has been reached in Spain. The Government is being held up to contempt as reactionary; the abolition of the *Guardia Civil* is being demanded; and the appetite of the mob for plunder is being whetted by the sack of religious buildings; while not the least ominous aspect of the whole business is that in Spain, as in Russia, the revolutionaries can confidently rely upon the bovine apathy of the bulk of the population.

The Collapse of Authority

WHETHER the inactivity of the Government is the result of deliberate policy or of helplessness is immaterial, for the salient fact is that it has become

discredited. Señor Zamora has shown himself to be a Spanish Kerensky, and it is quite useless for him to attempt to pull wool over the eyes of the rest of the world by asserting that there are so many convents that there are not enough troops to defend them, for there are no more convents, and no fewer soldiers, than there were in the days of the monarchy, when religious property was unmolested. The truth is that the republican authorities were by no means sorry to see the Church attacked, and the disorders have provided them with an excellent excuse for arresting prominent monarchists, and for suppressing monarchist newspapers, of which they have not been slow to avail themselves. The re-arrest of General Berenguer after his acquittal, the seizure of the property of the Royal Family, and the decision to put the King on his trial all show in which direction the wind is blowing. The Government is simply playing with fire, and it needs no remarkable prescience to prophesy that it will be burnt. How long the Republic will last is a matter for more speculation.

The Coming Elections

ONE of the leading members of the Spanish diplomatic service, who retired on the fall of the monarchy, stated the other day in private conversation that he gave the new régime, in one form or another, a life of from five to six years. Monarchy, in the etymological sense, may well return long before the expiration of this period, for the First Republic terminated its stormy career as a military dictatorship. The monarchists, quite apart from their obvious lack of a competent leader inside the country, will thus be well advised to hold their hands, as King Alfonso has asked them to do, until their fellow-countrymen have experienced to the full all the disadvantages of the republican system.

The Catalan Enigma

NOT the least of these disadvantages is likely to be an autonomous Catalonia. How far centrifugal influ-

ences have gone elsewhere remains to be seen, and the demand for a wholly federal State is not by any means so widespread as seemed at one time probable. Nevertheless, it is the problem of Catalonia that may be the cause of bringing the Republic down in the end. In the first place, the new Generalidad may go Red at any moment, and thus raise international complications of the most serious nature, while even if it remains pale pink, it is not easy to see how Spain is to exist with its only considerable industrial area excluded. Until the Cortes has met it is impossible to say exactly what the Catalan claims are likely to be, but that Barcelona will leave the control of finance in the hands of Madrid is improbable in the extreme, and the case of Australia has recently shown what may happen in a federal State without financial responsibility at the centre. Moreover, Spain has been compelled to tolerate a high tariff wall so as to provide the Catalan manufacturer with that home market which everyone, except Soviet Russia, considers essential to export trade; and the Spaniard, to whom the cost of living is already like a red rag to one of his own bulls, is hardly likely to give a preference to the Catalan, of whose contribution to the national exchequer he is in future to be deprived. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Catalonia cannot live by taking in each other's washing, for the rural districts are too poor to absorb the products of the industrial centres. This seems likely to be an enigma that it will puzzle the new rulers of the Peninsula to solve.

The International Aspect

WITH a few honourable exceptions, the British Press has shown no appreciation whatever of the seriousness of the issues at stake in Spain. The misfortunes of a monarch who has always been a firm friend to this country have afforded it infinite amusement, and once again it has been taken in, as it was in respect of Russia, by the professions of every politician of the Left who

gives its jackals an interview with his tongue in his cheek. Why is it that nominally Conservative papers in this country always adopt a Radical and Socialist tone where the affairs of other nations are concerned? One wonders, too, how many of the special correspondents who have recently been rushed to Spain have ever visited the country before, have ever read a page of its history, or can speak a word of its language. In any event, the British public has been left wholly unacquainted with the fact that if, as is by no means improbable, the Spanish extremists attempt to invade Portugal, Great Britain is bound by treaty to send troops to the latter's assistance, while any serious complications in Morocco, let alone Red control of Catalonia, might well precipitate a European crisis of the first magnitude. As for the attitude of certain Labour M.P.s towards King Alfonso, it is merely fresh evidence of their inferiority complex, and recalls their spiritual forbears, who got an equal amount of satisfaction out of referring to "the man, Charles Stuart."

The Nazi Progress

THE German political situation at the present time is as much under the influence of foreign, as of domestic affairs, and the salient fact is that the two extreme parties, the Communists and the National Socialists, are continuing to make progress whenever an opportunity occurs for them to test their strength. The action of the Government in countering the manœuvres of Herr Hitler and his followers by proroguing the Reichstag until the autumn is certainly popular enough with the so-called moderate parties (why, incidentally, the British Press includes the Socialists in this category it is not easy to understand), but the latter are every day becoming a less important factor, for the simple reason that they are losing ground with the nation as a whole. National Socialist control of the Reich might or might not constitute a threat to Great Britain, but no useful purpose

whatever is served by refusing to face the fact that such control is now a definite probability, and that at no distant date. One would have thought that the British Press and public would have had enough of these "moderate" parties on the Continent upon whom they are always pinning their faith, but the Englishman resolutely refuses to learn from experience so far as international affairs are concerned. What, however, it would be well to realize is that if the Brüning administration gives even an appearance of climbing down before any foreign Power, it will be swept out of office by a flood of popular indignation. It is doubtful, too, whether the President is as popular as he was, for it is widely felt that he has identified himself too much with the group of politicians which has controlled Germany since the Armistice, and which is now universally suspected and disliked.

Herr Hitler's Tactics

THE tactics of the National Socialists are directed towards securing control of Prussia, in the belief that whoever rules Prussia rules the Reich. With this end in view, every effort is being made to force a dissolution of the Prussian Diet. Normally, this does not take place until the spring of next year, but as the Presidential elections are due at that time, too, Herr Hitler is desirous of establishing himself in control of Prussia before the time comes to choose a successor to Marshal von Hindenburg. Evidence of the strength of the Nazis and of the Stahlhelm, with which the former are co-operating, is given by the rapidity with which the necessary signatures, five million, for the first step in securing a dissolution were collected, though, of course, many more votes than that will be needed to provide a National Socialist majority. The stock argument against the Nazis is that even if they attained power they would not possess leaders with the requisite ability to exercise it. Precisely the same charges were preferred against the

Fascists in the days before the march on Rome, and they may well prove to be as false in the one case as they were in the other. Hitler may, or may not, turn out to be a Mussolini, but it is quite useless for those in this country who do not like his views to write him off as a Boulanger. It is true that the German nation is not gifted with the political sense of the French, but it does know a man when it sees one, and, as has been said, an increasing number of Germans are supporting the Nazis whenever there is a chance.

A German Opinion

BARON William de Ropp, one of the shrewdest and most detached observers of German politics at the present time, writes from Berlin as follows :—

"The difficulties confronting the German Chancellor are increasing rather than diminishing. The problem of reconciling the urgent claims of agriculture for protective tariffs with the general insistent demand for the lowering of food prices appears practically impossible to solve. The threatening financial outlook forces the Government to contemplate measures of economy which are causing serious anxiety, while the alleged intention further to reduce the pay of State officials is producing an atmosphere of insecurity and discontent in quarters on whose loyalty the safety of the country must, more than ever, depend in the present troubled times. Under these circumstances the pressure on Herr Brüning to broach the dangerous subject of Reparations is increasing, and the demand for a radical revision of the Young Plan is by no means confined to the parties of the Right. The international consequences of a breakdown of the Young Plan are either not fully realized, or purposely ignored, by many Germans, and the view is expressed that the Government should, at all cost, refuse to continue the annual payments to Germany's 'rich' creditors of sums which should be utilized for alleviating the widespread distress undoubtedly existing in the Fatherland.

It must be said that little understanding is shown by the majority of Germans for the difficulties confronting other peoples, and that the tendency to exaggerate Germany's own troubles and to minimize those of other nations is largely responsible for the existing animosity towards the creditor countries."

The Stahlhelm

"THE Stahlhelm remains the backbone of the German Nationalist movement, and the growing unpopularity of the Parliamentary system and of political parties is tending to increase the importance of this non-party organization. Originally mainly military in its aims, the Stahlhelm has entered the political arena, and has recently come into prominence by initiating the referendum for the dissolution of the Prussian Diet. The Stahlhelm's chief aim, the revival and maintenance of German *Wehrwillen*, i.e., of the Prussian military spirit, is pursued more by means of ocular demonstrations of a military nature than by written propaganda. The annual general rallies, concentrating over 100,000 disciplined and uniformed men in one town, never fail to make a profound impression on the civilian population. In former years Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich were the scene of these imposing field days, these places being chosen for inner political reasons. The choice of Coblenz for 1930 and of Breslau for 1931 indicate that the Stahlhelm is attaching increased importance to foreign politics. The last rally at Coblenz, attended by approximately 140,000 men, had a most disturbing influence on French public opinion, and it must be feared that the meeting to be held on the 30th and 31st of May at Breslau in close proximity to the Polish frontier will not be viewed with indifference by Germany's eastern neighbour. It is estimated that about 150,000 men will be present, a number greatly exceeding the total strength of the Reichswehr. The spectacle of an almost endless procession of men marching past their leaders in military

formation in a uniform practically indistinguishable from that worn by the Reichswehr can hardly be expected to act as a stimulant to pacifism in Warsaw."

A Change for the Worse

THERE can, unfortunately, be no doubt that the high hopes which were entertained earlier in the year of a settlement of the chief points at issue between France and Italy have not been fulfilled, and that for a variety of reasons, of which by no means the least important has been the meddling of Mr. Arthur Henderson. It was freely admitted in both French and Italian circles at the time of the Naval Conference in London last year that the question of naval parity between the two Powers had only come to the fore as a result of the Washington Conference, and even now it is by no means as vital as is commonly supposed. After all, armaments are the outward and visible sign of national policy, and if France and Italy could agree upon the political problems which are at present keeping them apart, a settlement of their differences in the matter of armaments would easily be effected. The British Government, influenced almost entirely by considerations of domestic politics, has not only tried to force the pace, but has begun at the wrong end, namely, with the armaments, and in consequence it has made matters worse, instead of better, for the suspension of negotiations never leaves the subject under discussion exactly where it was when the conversations began. For this state of affairs Mr. Henderson is personally responsible to a very large extent. He is probably right in following the example of Lord Castlereagh and Sir Austen Chamberlain in discussing affairs with foreign statesmen direct, though he would do well also to study Canning's attitude towards international conferences, but the desire to increase the prestige of his party with the British electorate has led him to attempt "stunts" in the field of foreign politics, and it is not surprising that these have invariably proved unsuccessful.

The French Press has now suggested that Rome and Paris are far more likely to come to an agreement if London is excluded from their conversations. A Palmerstonian policy demands a Palmerston. Bismarck described an earlier Foreign Secretary as a lath painted to look like iron: some laths are not painted.

The Points at Issue

AS the Franco-Italian *malaise* is one of the most serious threats to the peace of Europe at the present time it is important that the causes of it should be clearly understood. The chief bone of contention is undoubtedly the status of Italians in Tunis. By an old agreement with the Bey of that country, concluded in the days before the French Protectorate was established, the Italian settlers retain their nationality, have their own schools, and, as their numbers are greater than the French, they constitute a veritable *imperium in imperio*, to which France is desirous, in accordance with her immemorial policy towards the stranger within her gates, of putting an end. To a lesser extent, the same applies to the Italian workmen who have crossed the Alps since the war. Then, again, Italy claims that her neighbour has never fulfilled the Treaty of London, signed in 1915, by which she was to receive compensation in the event of either Great Britain or France increasing her colonial possessions at the expense of Germany, and at Rome stress is laid upon the contrast between Great Britain, who ceded Jubaland in accordance with this arrangement, and France, who has yielded nothing at all. The delimitation of the frontier between Libya and Tunis is also still an open question, though this should be capable of adjustment without any very great difficulty.

The Pros and Cons

THERE can be no shadow of doubt but that Signor Mussolini would himself welcome a final settlement

with France. He has always desired such a result, and it is an open secret that Signor Grandi, the Italian Foreign Minister, shares this sentiment to the full. There are also powerful influences at work in Paris for the establishment of a close Franco-Italian understanding, and it is held by such leaders of public opinion as M. Coty that an *entente* between the two Powers, similar to that which existed before the war between France and Russia, would be a guarantee of the maintenance of peace in Europe, and this would certainly be the case. Latin civilization is the basis upon which the whole edifice of the modern world has been erected, and it is still by far the most important cultural influence in the universe, while society in the Latin countries has been less affected by the disruptive forces of the twentieth century than any other. If, therefore, France and Italy could come together it would be a very definite gain to humanity as a whole. That this standpoint is the right one is surely proved by the fact that it is the enemies of society, that is to say the Freemasons and the parties of the Left, that are doing their best to bring about war between France and Italy, though it is often perfectly honest nationalists who are made the dupes of this game.

Rumania

WHILE a monarch has lost his throne at one end of Europe a second monarch has been strengthening his position at the other end of it. It remains, of course, to be seen what are the ultimate results of King Carol's dissolution of the Rumanian Parliament, but the King appears to be developing a force of character that has hitherto been quite unexpected. The British public would do well to be on its guard against mis-statements with regard to Rumania, for already there are signs of the beginning of a campaign in Great Britain against King Carol, similar to that which was waged for so many years against King Alfonso, and in neither case is it difficult to answer the question *cui bono*.

I

Arnold Bennett

Now that Arnold Bennett, whom we cherished, is dead,
and Robert Bridges, that inveterate deep lover
of life will not toss again his lion head,
it is time to look back and tell their virtues over.
There was always a space, Arnold, in what you said,
a pretended stammer of thought as though to cover
the young, and, in spite of life, the astonished
fancies that cried as sadly as the wheeling plover
over the empty autumn fields to the spring. "Return!
Where are your snowdrops now that the bracken's brown?
Is there not always spring in a bird's sight?"
You also, Arnold, in the autumn would not learn
that the lilies crumple and the cowslips are trodden down.
"Come back!" you were always crying, and you were right.

II

Robert Bridges

And you, Robert Bridges, you made your last will
and testament of beauty in the winter of your thought,
but there was no snow of the mind falling upon Boar's Hill
nor upon the further fields that your vision sought.
You could have lingered a year with a daffodil,
pondering on the dust that could be so brightly fraught
with unaccountable design, and yet could find the thrill
of all matter for ever prevailing upon nought.
Long were your years, but their orbit was inwards
to the quiet at the heart of the cyclone where leaves
and the butterflies hang as still as in amber,
or as dew on the crocus before it draws sunwards.
You are flown, you are melted but when no wind grieves
in the calm of the evening we shall remember.

Humbert Wolfe.

The New Trinity Looks At Life

By Arnold Lunn

SCIENCE to-day is firmly seated on that throne which was once occupied by the Church. Our modern prophets are the popular scientists whose pulpit is the popular Press. Like their medieval predecessors, they are in danger of succumbing to those dangers which beset all prophets, both major and minor, the temptation to pontificating on matters which lie outside their particular province.

Every age creates its own legends. The Victorian Age enriched mythology with the imaginary portrait of a new kind of saint—the scientist consumed with a holy passion for pure truth. "Sit down before fact like a little child," wrote Huxley, "be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses Nature leads, or you shall learn nothing."

As I have elsewhere* shown, Huxley failed to practise what he preached, ran away from the facts of psychical research, and refused to sit down before the great facts of religious experience; but at least he was highly successful in impregnating the public consciousness with the conviction that theologians as a class were more concerned to rig the evidence in support of their creed than to discover the truth in painful contrast to the scientists, whose convictions were the product of an unbiassed examination of the facts.

The Huxleyan legend helps us to understand the curious fact that the man in the street is tremendously impressed if the Astronomer Royal believes in God and not in the least impressed if a bishop believes in Relativity.

Nothing could be less scientific than the theory that

* "The Flight from Reason," Chapter XV.

scientists find it easier than other people to eliminate bias from their views. It is a universal characteristic of the human mind to attach more weight to evidence which corroborates than to evidence which conflicts with preconceived views. Huxley shied like a startled horse when confronted with facts which appeared to suggest that the medium, Home, possessed supernormal powers, and flatly refused to investigate phenomena which were vouched for by an impressive list of unimpeachable witnesses. In other words, his reaction to evidence which contradicted his whole philosophy of life was precisely similar to the reactions of the Victorian bishops when confronted with the evidence for evolution. From which it would seem to follow that a man's attitude to truth is not determined by the position of his collar stud, and that a disinterested passion for truth is no more common among scientists who button their collars in front than among bishops who button their collars behind.

In support of this thesis I propose to subpœna the three authors of a popular work which has recently been published—" The Science of Life."

" The Science of Life " appeared in fortnightly parts, and was intended for a popular public. In this article I am only concerned with those aspects of the book which bear upon the thesis of this article, but I should like with all sincerity of thanks to express my gratitude for this brilliant, fascinating, and comprehensive survey of modern science. How far scientists could accept its conclusions I am not competent to say, but as a mere layman I am entitled to record my view that the book is readable from cover to cover, and appeals with peculiar force to those who, though interested in science, have no scientific training.

Of this work, Mr. H. G. Wells, Professor Julian Huxley, and Mr. H. G. Wells's son are the joint authors. The opening chapter, if style be any indication, would seem to be Mr. Wells's unaided effort. This chapter opens with a concise but convincing explanation of the

many points on which Mr. Wells's "Outline of History" was an improvement on the efforts of all other historians, ancient and modern. It was suggested to Mr. Wells that his talent for presenting familiar truths in a popular dress should not be confined to history. Hence "The Science of Life," which goes far to justify the claims which Mr. Wells makes on its behalf in his introductory chapter. Mr. Wells then proceeds to introduce us to his partners and motions them on to the stage in a sentence of majestic effrontery. "Together this trinity, three-in-one, constitutes the author of this book." In the new Trinity it would seem that Mr. Wells junior plays the part of a ghost, more hard-working perhaps than holy.

The implied comparison between the three authors of this book and the three authors of the universe is emphasized by the attitude of God-like superiority which the new Trinity adopts to the reader of this book. The reader is referred to throughout as Mr. Everyman, and Mr. Everyman is conceived as follows: "The home of Mr. Everyman," writes the new Trinity, "is a house in the suburbs, between city and country, with a little garden attached. It is the average home of the civilized man. . . . In this little domain there live Mr. and Mrs. Everyman, with their son, Master Everyman, one domestic servant, a tabby cat and a fox terrier. . . . Mr. Everyman is an active member of a large economic community. He goes up every morning to work or business. Mrs. Everyman is economically dependent; but she is the head of a little family world. The domestic life of the couple is, on the whole, exemplary, harmonious and agreeable."

One is pleased to find Mr. Wells expressing his cordial approval of the monogamous Mr. Everyman.

If Mr. Everyman really represents the public for whom this book is intended, Mr. Wells's heroic effort to put across the old-fashioned Darwinism which he learnt at South Kensington in the 'nineties is more comprehensible. If Mr. Everyman "goes up every morning

to business" it is more than probable that he has no time to keep abreast of biological controversy. The new Trinity may, therefore, gamble on the chance that Mr. Everyman knows even less about the modern attitude to Darwinism than did Mr. Wells when he wrote the "Outline of History," and vastly less than does Mr. Wells to-day now that he has had the advantage of a little instruction by Mr. Belloc, who so kindly undertook his education in modern biology.

The pathetic loyalty of the new Trinity to Darwin's memory does more credit to their hearts than to their heads, and is an interesting illustration of my contention that scientists are no less reluctant than theologians to scrap outworn interpretations of life.

Darwinism owed its immense success to the fact that it provided scientists who did not wish to believe in God with an answer to Paley's argument from the design to the designer. It had seemed impossible to explain the marvellous and innumerable cases of adaptation without the aid of a creative mind behind Nature until Darwin suggested that the appearance of design was deceptive, and that this seeming design was the result of blind chance selecting the variations which were most fitted to survive.

In his "Outline of History" Mr. Wells stated the case for Darwinism in a form in which it was commonly stated thirty or forty years ago. Mr. Belloc then published his "Companion to the Outline of History," in which he attacked Mr. Wells all along the line, and in which he pointed out that few modern biologists are Darwinian. Mr. Wells was rash enough to challenge the statement and thereby to reveal his amazing ignorance of modern biological thought. In the controversy which ensued Mr. Wells was out-manœuvred and routed from the field. Such, at least, was the verdict not only of the Catholic Press, but of the Press as a whole. The *New Statesman* (November 27, 1926), which has no natural affinity with Catholicism and which has often entered the

lists as the champion of science against obscurantism, wrote as follows:—

> But the curious thing about this particular controversy is that it turns largely upon a point about which Mr. Wells might be supposed to know much more than Mr. Belloc, and yet about which Mr. Belloc is substantially in the right—namely, the adequacy of the theory of Natural Selection as an account or explanation of the evolution of man. . . .

I opened "The Science of Life" with the hope that Mr. Wells would not gamble on the chance that Mr. Everyman had never heard of the Wells-Belloc controversy. But, alas! Mr. Wells dare not meet Mr. Belloc in argument—he contents himself with a foolish travesty of something which Mr. Belloc never said—and will not even condescend to mention the main difficulties of Darwinism as set forth in Professor Kellogg's well-known book, "Darwinism Today." None of the grave objections against Darwinism are met, and virtually none of them are even mentioned.

We are treated to the customary sleight-of-hand whereby Darwinian conjurors substitute the fact of natural selection, which nobody denies, for the theory that natural selection is the chief agent in the production of new species. The great truism that the fittest to survive actually do survive is once again solemnly trotted forward as if the survival of the fittest explained the great evolutionary transformations, such as the transformation of a reptile into a bird.

The authors quote with great approval from Professor J. B. S. Haldane's delightful book, "Possible Worlds." "The assertion is still sometimes made," writes Professor Haldane, "that no one has ever seen natural selection at work *in the production of new characters*."

The italics are mine. The authors proceed to describe a case of natural selection. About 1800 a large wood in the Cleveland district of Yorkshire, containing pine and birch, was divided into two by a stretch of heath. In 1885 the pines in one division were replaced by birches,

while in the other the birches were almost entirely ousted by pines. In consequence the moth *oporabia autumnata*, which inhabits two woods, had been placed in two different environments. In both woods a light and a dark variety occur, but in the pine wood over 96 per cent. were dark, in the birch wood only 15 per cent.—the whiter moths, which show up against the dark pines, are being exterminated, " and in a few more years natural selection will have done its work and the pine wood will be inhabited entirely by dark-coloured insects."

Come, come, Mr. Haldane, this will not do. Poor Mr. Everyman will want his money back if the conjuror cannot produce something better than this out of the old Darwinian hat. Natural selection, you told us, has been seen at work in the production of *new characters*. Where are these new characters? White moths are being exterminated—granted—but no new characters are being created. The black moths in the woods are the descendants of the black moths which were there before the birch were replaced by pine. What " new character " has been produced in the process? What bearing have these facts on the power of natural selection to transform a reptile into a bird? All that you have proved is that moths which are badly camouflaged disappear, much as guns which were badly camouflaged were blotted out in the war. But the war would have had to last a very long time to transform a gun into an aeroplane, and natural selection would require another ally more potent than the mere passage of time to transform a reptile into a bird.

Mr. Everyman, before considering these alleged vindications of Darwinism, would do well to ponder on the essence of Darwinism as defined by Darwin himself. We are suffering at the moment from the vagueness of people who describe themselves as Neo-Darwinians, and who remind me of those broad churchmen who pretend that they still believe in the divinity of Christ and then proceed to add that there is an element of the divine in

all of us. The essence of Christianity is the belief that Christ was God, and the essence of Darwinism is the belief that natural selection is a substitute for God. Natural selection, Darwin argued, did in effect create new species out of fortuitous variations as truly as a man may be said to create a building out of the material provided by stones of various shapes. Furthermore, Darwin did not believe in mutations, though he was familiar with the word, but remained convinced that it was " by the accumulation of extremely slight variations that new species arise."

To vindicate Darwinism it is necessary, among other things, to answer a question which Darwin posed, and to which Darwin could find no satisfactory answer, a question which our new Trinity has apparently never tried to answer: " Why, if species have descended from other species by fine gradations," asked Darwin, " do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms; why is not all Nature in confusion instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined? "

It is, moreover, necessary to explain the first origin and perpetuation of slight variations which in their rudimentary stage are not advantageous. Again, it is necessary to explain the evolution of complex forms, such as the eye, which consist of several parts which cannot function unless they are fitted into each other.

When I read the new Trinity's attempt to meet this last criticism, I murmured gently: " And yet there are not three incomprehensibles, but one incomprehensible."

I have selected at random three of the major difficulties which no Darwinian ever disposed of. Mr. Everyman can test the sincerity of those who pretend to vindicate Darwinism by observing whether in the first place they mention these particular difficulties, and whether in the second place they make any attempt to meet them.

Darwinism, as we have seen, attempts to explain the evolution of life without appeal to a directing mind, but

even Darwinism failed to explain the origin of life without resource to a supernatural agent.

We know that the earth first began as a red-hot globe on which no life was possible, and that life must in consequence have appeared on the globe at some definite point in time.

The origin of life must be due either to a supernatural creative act or to spontaneous generation. Now all attempts to demonstrate the possibility of spontaneous generation have failed. Huxley, in the course of a presidential address to the British Association, expressed the opinion that the biogenesists who denied spontaneous generation had been victorious all along the line. But he added that if it were given to him " to look beyond the abysses of geologically recorded time," he would expect " to be the witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from not living matter." It is easy to imagine the retort which Gladstone would have provoked had he opened his controversy with Huxley on Genesis in some such words as these: " If it were given to me to look beyond the abysses of historically recorded time, I should expect to be a witness of the emergence of Eve from Adam's rib."

It is as difficult to conceive life emerging from lifeless matter as a woman from the rib of a man. Neither type of " emergence " takes place to-day and there is not a shred of evidence to suggest the conditions which prevailed in the early history of our globe were more favourable for spontaneous generation than they are to-day.

In effect Thomas Huxley was only putting into different words the confession which Weissmann blurted out with more candour than discretion, " spontaneous generation, in spite of all vain efforts to demonstrate it, remains for me a logical necessity."

Now, whereas theists appeal to reason in support of the dogma that God exists, atheists begin by assuming that God does not exist and from this false assumption

proceed to deduce conclusions which are in flat contradiction with all experience and with all recorded scientific experiment. Thus our new Trinity assume that God does not exist, and then proceed to suggest that life must somehow, somewhere, and at some time have originated from lifeless matter.

"At some remote time in the remote past," they write, "when the earth was hotter and its air and crust differed physically and chemically from their present state, it seems reasonable to suppose that life must have originated in a simple form from lifeless matter."

On this I wrote to Professor Huxley asking why it was "reasonable to suppose" that spontogenesis would be facilitated by a high temperature. He replied as follows:—"We say (*a*) that it is impossible to know exactly how life began, (*b*) but that so far as we know, *all* the conditions, notably chemical as well as those of temperature, must have been different in the early stages of this planet, (*c*) accordingly, the fact that life is apparently not being generated now is no proof that it could not have been then—that is all.

"Meanwhile the presumption from the principles of continuity is that life arose, somehow, from not-life—the onus of proof lies on the opponent of this view."

I agree with the last paragraph of (*c*), but at least the complete absence of spontaneous generation in historic times strengthens the case of those who deny spontaneous generation. "You might just as well say," replies Professor Julian Huxley, who asked to see those pages of this article in which by his kind permission I have quoted his private letter, "you might just as well say that the fact that pterodactyls or matter in the nebular condition do not exist on the earth now is proof that they never existed."

It is symptomatic that Professor Huxley should compare the belief in pterodactyls which rests on the assured scientific evidence of fossils with the belief in spontaneous generation which is based on "an act of

faith." And I am amazed that Professor Huxley considers that the *onus probandi* lies with those who cannot make an act of faith in a phenomenon for which no evidence has yet been produced. Surely the *onus probandi* rests with those who assert that something took place in the past which they admit has never taken place in historic times. "Men of science," wrote Professor Tyndale, "prolong that method of Nature from the present into that past. The observed uniformity of Nature is their only guide." Thomas Huxley at least was sufficiently clear-sighted to realize that his own belief in spontogenesis was based not on reason but on blind faith. Indeed, he described it as "an act of philosophic faith," for which he could produce no proof.

The new Trinity are to be congratulated on their courage in breaking away from the traditions of Victorian science in one important respect. They have included a chapter on "Borderland Science," as they term physical research. This marks a real advance on the obscurantism of Thomas Huxley. Further, they have made a real effort to approach the problems of physical research in a spirit of unbiassed detachment. They must be given full credit for trying.

The whole treatment of this subject provides yet another illustration of the main thesis of this article, the fact that scientists, no less than theologians, have two standards for evidence according to whether the evidence conflicts with or corroborates their general philosophy of life.

Before discussing the verdict which the new Trinity passes on, say, telepathy, for instance, let us compare the evidence for (*a*) Darwinism, (*b*) major evolution, and (*c*) telepathy itself.

I have said enough to suggest that Darwinism might well be described as it is described in the "Dictionaire Encyclopedique des Sciences," as "a fiction, a poetical accumulation of probabilities without truth, and an attractive explanation without demonstration."

There is no direct evidence for Darwinism, but there is a strong direct evidence for telepathy. Now as to major evolution. It is, I suggest, convenient to classify evolution as major and minor, if only to expose a familiar conjuring trick whereby writers like Mr. Wells cite evidence in favour of minor evolution as if it was equally valuable in support of major evolution. Minor evolution is beyond dispute, for it is clear that several species, notably the horse, have varied greatly throughout the ages. The real point at issue is not whether species can vary within the framework of fixed limitations, which is proved among other things by the evolution from eohippus into equus, but whether one species can change into another. You cannot prove what, for want of a better term, may be described as major evolution, e.g. the transformation of a bird into a reptile, by a series of fossils which prove that the ancestral horse differed in many important respects from the modern horse. There are, it is true, a vast amount of facts which are strongly suggestive of major evolution, notably the evidence from useless structures and from embryos, but the fossil evidence is inconclusive. It is disappointing, to put it at its lowest, that we should find no evidence in the rocks of those countless millions of intermediate types between a creature with no wings and a creature with a fully-developed wing.

Why has this interesting process completely ceased in historic times? Why do we find no reptiles to-day in process of developing into birds? The believer in major evolution is, in many respects, in much the same position as the old-fashioned Protestant who accepts all the miracles of the New Testament but who asserts that miracles ceased with the Apostolic Age.

I am not in the least concerned to deny major evolution, the belief in which, however, derives most of its vitality from the fact that the only possible alternative to it is the belief in special creation, a doctrine as unattractive to modern minds as it was natural to the medieval mind.

But though I do not deny major evolution, I submit with all due respect that a chain of evidence in which there are so many missing links can hardly be regarded as complete.

Now let us look at the evidence for telepathy. "As exemplified by Professor Gilbert Murray and his daughter," says the "Science of Life," "one observer concentrates his attention on a book or picture, while the other out of normal sight and hearing in another room, waits with a vacant mind to record whatever impression it receives. Results have been got by these two, of a quality and exactitude difficult to explain by any other hypothesis than that of a direct thought transmission. Fairly complex drawings have been rudely reproduced, and scenes read by the one have been described by the other."

The evidence for telepathy, in other words, is direct evidence based on the experience of unimpeachable witnesses. The evidence for major evolution is indirect. We can reproduce the phenomena of telepathy to-day, whereas the transformation of reptiles into birds has apparently ceased. There are thousands of recorded cases of telepathy; there is no recorded case, either in historic times or in the record of the rocks, of a true intermediate type between a reptile with no wings and a parent bird with its fully-developed wings.

And yet the new Trinity, while assuring us that there is "no denial of organic evolution except on the part of manifestly ignorant and prejudiced and superstitious minds," urges us to maintain towards telepathy "an attitude of critical indecision."

The new Trinity then proceeds to discuss the amazingly well-authenticated phenomena produced by that well-known American medium, "Margery." Fortunately one can accept the reality of these phenomena without accepting the spiritualistic hypothesis, but it is impossible to refuse credence to the residue of supernormal facts which remain after sifting the records of physical research

without a degree of scepticism which, if applied with equal rigour to other fields of thought, would sweep aside as unproven most of the admitted facts of history and of science. The evidence for these phenomena is overwhelmingly stronger than that for organic evolution.

"We cannot absolutely reject the evidence for these phenomena," writes the new Trinity. . . . "Yet it is a lesser improbability to suppose that a charming lady, an eminent entomologist, some highly respectable Bostonians and a few privileged visitors have been mistaken in their impressions or inaccurate and imperfect in their accounts of what happened on certain obscure and secluded occasions, than that all the rest of our general ideas about life are wrong."

Just the same sort of thing was said by Victorian bishops when confronted with evidence which suggested that their general ideas about Genesis were mistaken.

But I fear that the time is approaching when those who share the views of the new Trinity will have to admit that their general ideas about life need revising and that the universe is not quite so simple as it seemed in those far-off days when Mr. Wells was reading a portion of Darwin every night before conscientiously omitting to say his prayers.

The Legend of Oil from Coal

By Alwyne Meade (author of "Modern Gas Works Practice")

WITHIN the past few weeks the daily Press has flaunted before a credulous public the fulfilment of a long-sought dream, namely, the provision from within of sufficient quantities of oil in this country to secure the independence of the Navy from external sources and to meet, in addition, the requirements of merchant shipping, industry and the domestic consumer. Indeed, we are promised a modern analogue of the widow's cruse—and this in a country which to all intents and purposes is bereft of anything in the nature of oil-bearing strata or "gushers," as the terms are understood in the great exhaustless fields of America, Persia, and elsewhere.

Who was responsible for launching the news? Was it, perhaps, Mr. George Hall, Civil Lord of the Admiralty, who in a speech at Pontypridd in March, stated that "during the last twelve or eighteen months it had been proved that oil produced from coal could be used as a fuel and gave almost the same results as natural oil, and that with proper organization of power-producing industry in this country, instead of the nation spending £42,000,000 annually on imported oil, a very large proportion of that money could be expended on oil produced from our own coalfields"? Mr. Hall, however, appears to pin his faith to the process of low temperature carbonization. The past twenty years' history of the commercial possibilities of this process would seem to speak for itself, and though no one need attempt to deny that, technically, the "job" can be done, low temperature carbonization as a panacea for our oil requirements may be dismissed from consideration, unless, perhaps—as Professor Henry Briggs, of Edinburgh University, lately suggested in the *Times*—we give up the idea of trying to produce a solid smokeless fuel and concentrate on ascertaining our indigenous resources

of shales and torbanites whose oil-yielding properties, when retorted, are not so much a matter for conjecture. As Professor Briggs says, the retorting of carbonaceous minerals for oil is no new development; it was successfully practised, like so many other useful things now forgotten, in mid-Victorian times. In the sixties, at the zenith of the industry, there were, scattered about our coalfields, several hundred works producing oil. They were snuffed out one by one by the influx of untaxed American and Russian petroleum. With the exception of the Scottish shale works, all are long since extinct. Their records are scanty, their personnel has died out, and its experience is lost; only a few refuse heaps and ruined walls remain as a monument to Cobdenism.

The lesson is clear. Our grandfathers devoted themselves to obtaining the best yield of oil both as to quantity and quality. They knew the oil produced from ordinary bituminous coal to be deficient in amount and inferior in quality, and they looked about for better raw materials. With a minimum of scientific guidance, and with no State expenditure on scientific research, they succeeded in discovering and utilizing some remarkable minerals.

It cannot, of course, be contended that the distillation of shale has distinguished itself as a commercial attraction in post-war days, and the unpleasant story of one undertaking promoted for this purpose will still be fresh in the minds of many who lost their money in it. The Government, however, might well set aside some quota from its annual expenditure on research for ascertaining once and for all our resources in these specific shales, the extent of their occurrence, and their suitability for oil production at a price competitive with existing external supplies. So far as the low temperature carbonization of ordinary bituminous coals and slacks is concerned we can accept the dispassionate judgment of Sir David Milne Watson, who presides over the largest coal carbonizing undertaking in the world, and whose company co-operated with the Government Fuel Research

Board in conducting full-scale experiments with this much-vaunted process. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Institute of Fuel last October, Sir David took none too hopeful a view of the future of smokeless fuels. It is the financial aspect which has always been, and is still, in question. Sir David expressed the opinion that "conceivably those plants which are situated in a geographical position so as to secure a good-quality slack at low prices and can command a good price for the coke produced will show a profit upon their operations. In those parts of the country at a distance from the coalfields the difference in the price that has to be paid for coal and that received from the sale of coke and gas does not appear to provide a sufficient margin to meet even operating expenses. Both the coke fuel and the rich gas of externally heated systems can at present be marketed without difficulty. *The oils, however, have so far proved most disappointing in quality, and their return, as with ammonia products, is negligible in assisting the costs of the treatment of the coal.*"* It is to be hoped that in the perfecting of either a cracking or hydrogenating process a means may be found for rendering these oils suitable and efficient substitutes for imported natural oils, and thereby improving their value. Until this can be successfully achieved commercially, and the consumer of solid smokeless fuel has to pay no more than he pays for raw coal, it is unlikely that there can be any hopeful future for any low-temperature process whose sole or at least principal aim is, in any case, the production of a domestic fuel superior to coal and not the production of oil. So much for low-temperature carbonization as the catholicon—for twenty years and more there has been much cry but precious little wool.

A few weeks ago a responsible London evening newspaper devoted a large share of its front page to an encomium of an oil-from-coal process which "is slowly

* The italics are the writer's.

bringing to birth a new English industry." The article proceeded to explain that the "treatment of coal with hydrogen at very high temperatures and pressures converts a very high proportion of the coal substance into liquid fuel, and it is claimed that the petrol thus produced equals in quality the imported petrol and that it can be produced at nearly the same price." It is unnecessary to explain here the involved technique of what is now familiarly known as the hydrogenation of coal, but, to say the least of it, the results of experiments which have so far been published scarcely provide justification for so sweeping a statement. Certainly, hydrogenation can, as has been shown by the Fuel Research Board, be made with much care and precision to produce pints, but can this delicate operation be translated into millions of gallons? Let us examine current opinion and recent events.

Much, undoubtedly, goes on behind the locked doors of the great factory of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., at Billingham, and some eighteen months ago, the late Lord Melchett stated that a semi-technical plant for treating coal was in operation at this factory and producing high-grade motor spirit. At the annual meeting of the same undertaking in March, Sir Harry MacGowan spoke in no uncertain terms of the prospects of coal hydrogenation, and stated that during the past year major developments and improvements in the process had been effected. To quote Sir Harry, Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., is "the only company in this country which has brought to a successful conclusion the difficult technical operation of hydrogenating coal into petrol with but a small residue of waste product of no value."

The situation, indeed, seems rather to indicate that at Billingham something has happened which has not become common knowledge, and that results have been obtained which other recognized experimenters have failed to produce. The Government Director of Fuel

Research, working with 50 lb. of coal at a time, reported it as being possible to obtain a yield representing 80 gallons of light spirit per ton of coal, while by a reprocessing of some of the heavier oils obtained it was considered that possibly 120 to 130 gallons of spirit per ton of coal treated might be obtained. Even, however, with such a yield the weight of spirit derived from 2,240 lb. of coal would only amount to some 800 to 900 lb., so that the question arises as to what is to be done with the residue, and whether a process can be commercially sound if only about one-third of the raw material employed is converted into the desired product. The Fuel Research Board's results should, by the way, be considered in conjunction with Sir Harry MacGowan's statement, quoted above, that conversion takes place with but a small residue of waste products.

Apart from any problems which beset the actual chemical and physical process of conversion there is, or was, the outstanding difficulty of building plant which will stand up to the conditions prevailing. As is well known, Germany was the pioneer in hydrogenation, and early in this year it was announced from that country that the laboratory for carrying out large-scale experiments on hydrogenation of coal established at Duisburg by the A.G. für Steinkohleverflüssigung und Veredelung had been closed owing to the want of suitable materials for the parts of the plant exposed to very high pressures, which were very quickly worn out. The same trouble has prompted the I.G. Farbenindustrie to curtail considerably its activity in the field of hydrogenation of coal. This point has been emphasized by more than one authority and whereas its incidence is of no great concern in plants already experimented with it becomes of immense significance when considered in conjunction with the large-scale commercial production of oil. Heavy depreciation of plant did, in fact, at one time seem inevitable, while the production of cheap hydrogen is a *sine qua non* of commercial solvency.

The writer feels it incumbent upon him to point out that in no sense has he intended to disparage the work of those who have intimately associated themselves with practical research into a process which is as fascinating as it is remarkable. Even to have gone so far as the published results at present take us is an achievement worthy of unstinted commendation if we are considering the skill and patience of those engaged in the researches. We have, however, to take a quite different viewpoint. The only question at issue to-day is whether the production of oil from coal by hydrogenation has or is likely to yield results commercially useful. If we could assume that there are undiscovered properties in the constituents dealt with, we might reasonably hope for new and sensational developments. If the limitations of the process are *inherent in the materials themselves*, then mere research will not help us. The unknown quantity is Billingham, and, if the technical experts at this world-famous factory have already succeeded in devising really large-scale plant which will yield the desired product and at the same time a working profit, then our petrol (but not our oil) problems will in time bring about their own solution.

Have they succeeded? Billingham, so far as the outer world is concerned, is as silent as the Sphinx, but it is not going too far to say that the technical staff at this establishment have in at least one important direction beaten the Germans at their own game. By this is inferred that by the comparatively simple expedient of taking advantage of the exothermic nature of the reactions and by utilizing an inner thin-walled vessel which is readily replaced at small cost, the former tremendous obstacle of depreciation has been surmounted. Billingham, moreover, has a 10-ton unit in operation and is undoubtedly producing a highly "anti-knock" spirit. *Can this spirit, however, be produced at a price which can compete with untaxed foreign oil? The answer is in the negative.* A free-trade Government has, no doubt, paved the way for the establishment of this

new British industry by imposing an additional tax of 2d. per gallon on imported petrol, bringing the total tax to 6d. Owing to a world glut the present prices of petroleum products stand at exceptionally low levels and may tend to rise rather than fall. Assuming, however, that the average cost to the importer of foreign petrol is now around 3d. per gallon, then 3d. plus the 6d. duty brings up the price to something in the neighbourhood of that for which hydrogenation petrol can be produced. On the score of cost, therefore, it may appear at first sight that petrol from coal seems likely to be able to pay its way so long as succeeding Governments remain sympathetic and retain the petrol tax. This, however, overlooks the views of the income-tax payer who will have to make good the loss to the revenue which will result from the use of home-produced spirit paying no duty in place of dutiable imported spirit.

The first thing, therefore, to remember is that the whole question is still political rather than commercial. This consideration must, in fact, be a thorn in the side of the recently-formed International Hydrogenation Patents Company, representing a combination of British, German, and American interests, in view of the insecurity of an existence which depends upon what is in effect a permanent subsidy. It would seem, indeed, that before the new process could be launched on a large scale some assurance would have to be obtained to the effect that were the petrol tax to be dropped a subsidy would take its place.

The whole problem, of course, has many other facets. For instance, a supply of cheap hydrogen is essential, and it is only an establishment such as Billingham with its collossal output of this gas which could hope to produce it at a sufficiently low figure. The optimum size of the hydrogenation unit for large-scale production has still to be determined, and it is doubtful whether it would be technically or economically possible to operate "bombs" with a capacity of more than 20 or 30 tons

per day; accordingly, large-scale production would most probably involve a multiplication of small units, and even the present very unfavourable estimates of costs might thus be exceeded. At any rate, the industry, if it is to prove a factor of any moment on the present oil situation, would have to be established in the first place on a basis of some 3,000 to 4,000 tons of coal per day, and this would seem likely to involve the expenditure of from six to seven million sterling.

The second thing to remember is that, having accomplished this—or even greater things—the Navy is no nearer a solution of its oil problems, for *hydrogenation produces essentially a petrol, whereas the Navy is crying for the heavier fuel oil.* Maybe we shall, then, be faced with the paradoxical situation of scientists endeavouring to reverse one of the greatest advances they have registered within recent years in oil technology, namely, the conversion of heavy oils by cracking and hydrogenation into the lighter petrols.

The third, and most significant, thing to remember is that the last word remains to be spoken by the Diesel engine designers. Already we know of highly successful trials accomplished by land and air machines fitted with motors consuming heavy oils. There seems no question that within the comparatively near future such motors will supersede the petrol engine with a consequent restriction in the demand for lighter spirits. By the time an oil-from-coal industry could be started on any effective scale, the heavy oil engine will be with us. Hydrogenated coal yields "anti-knock" petrol—what the nation will soon be dependent on is "pro-knock" fuel oil. The rest is best left to the imagination!

One Thing and Another

By J. B. Morton

I consider myself most fortunate in having extracted from Mr. Charles Fiddington a promise to be allowed to make use, in this Review, of his carefully-kept diary. There is no keener observer of contemporary events alive to-day, nor one who is so well able to distinguish between what is important and what is not. Himself a man of wide culture—he was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity, Cambridge—he has a standard by which to judge the present trend in affairs, in art, in letters, in science. Indeed, he attends both the opera and the more advanced concerts, and his charming monograph on Clara, Countess of Kelmsfield, is a model of its kind. He is always ready to lend his tastefully furnished flat for a poetry-reading or a debate between two men of letters. His collection of first editions of twentieth-century verse is believed to run into four figures. He was buying up Canvianis even before the West End had heard of Canviani.

But I must let a few chosen extracts from his Diary speak for themselves.

May 3rd.—I spent the morning reading Lt.-Col. Brander-Marsh's admirably unbiased war revelations. There is no healthier sign of the times than the English common-sense attitude towards the war, and the refusal of our people to accept as truth the deluge of French propaganda. Colonel Brander-Marsh, who was in command of a cadet-school in Norfolk from 1917 onwards, explodes the myth of the Marne. "If there were any French troops present," he writes, "then all I can say is that I have met many of our own chaps who never saw them." His book is not documented, or marred by arid wastes of references because, as he himself says, "Documentary evidence is so easy to contradict that it is hardly worth while going in for it. Anybody can deny a fact." But one word of criticism. Is Colonel Brander-Marsh right in saying that there were French

marines at Dixmude?* It sounds improbable. Otherwise a welcome addition to our war literature, and a douche of cold water for those who seem to think that Foch won the war.

May 6th.—I see from my newspaper that the Liberal Party is rallying. Is not this a sign of the times?

May 7th.—Even the closest observers of our rapidly developing drama are apt to overlook the enormous contributions to technique which are being made by the B.B.C. I listened in recently to a new kind of play in which the characters only spoke the thoughts which came to them in their sleep. One of them was dreaming that he was in a lighthouse with a lunatic; and the producer has discovered a way of broadcasting the lunatic's breathing, by rubbing together two sheets of mica. In the same programme there was a most enjoyable debate on Hazlitt by two literary critics. So courteously was the debate conducted that there were none of those flat contradictions that so often turn a discussion into a mere undignified brawl. The critics apparently agreed on all important points, and when they disagreed on some trivial detail, one or other of them gave in, to avoid a scene. Listening to this part of the programme, I found myself wondering how the B.B.C. has managed to get a name for rowdy controversialism and even for ferocious mud-slinging. It stands to reason that an argument which is not carried on with all the usages of polite society might as well be handed over to a couple of Billingsgate fish-porters. Nothing is ever gained by violence.

May 9th.—I hear we are to have a critical estimate of Mr. Middleton Murry's book on the late D. H. Lawrence. I hope at least one chapter will be devoted to the poetry, and particularly to the later poetry, which I am sure nobody has yet really understood. I remember asking a young author not long ago what it was in

* Mr. Fiddington should ask one of our great military critics, say, General Spears, or Mr. Richard Aldington.

Lawrence's prose that everybody discussed so intensely, and he answered, "It was the man's genius, if you know what I mean." I was much struck by the blunt way he said that. Also, a woman writer confessed to me that what attracted her to Lawrence's books was his "great loneliness." I myself was struck by his fearlessness, and by a kind of rude strength in all he wrote. Sometimes one did not begin to get even a glimmering of his meaning, but the atmosphere of brutal reality, of things stripped stark, somehow compensated the reader.* There is no knowing what he might not have done, had he lived longer.

May 11th.—The news that Mr. Tompkins has seceded from his party, and is determined to push forward a Scheme for National Regeneration, only serves to show the immense vitality of our party system. Moreover, Mr. Tompkins is not merely destructive. It is true that he wants to "abolish the perilous laissez-faire which has led us to the brink of the abyss," but he is ready to substitute, "a policy of right-thinking, retrenchment and reform." That sounds the constructive note. I like, too, what he says about the necessity for making people vote, willy-nilly. If nobody voted, where would our political system be? The more of these schemes and plans we have, the better. Everybody is crying out for more organization and more rigorous control. Only last week we had a strong plea by an eminent surgeon for house-to-house weekly visits by qualified dentists, to make people take an interest in their teeth, and so double their efficiency. This is a minor point, but significant. No scheme can afford to ignore the question of National Health.

May 15th.—Mr. Tompkins has gone back to his party. I notice that he offers no explanation, but merely says that the reconciliation took place after a private dinner. One of two people have hinted that an indiscreet letter played an important part in the proceedings—as though

* Where have I heard all this before?

a politician would allow himself to be blackmailed! And in the twentieth century!

May 17th.—Last night I went to hear the new symphony by the yound Greek composer, Poulos. I must say, if I had not known what it was, I might have been rather bored before it was over. I fancy one ought to hear it five or six times before passing an opinion on it. At the first hearing there seems to be nothing to catch hold of. Thank goodness I had read what the musical critics had to say before I went to hear it. That gave me something to go on, and prevented me from floundering hopelessly. I will not attempt to describe the music, because to do that one needs to know the language, so to speak. Where you or I would say, "the climax of this passage was too noisy," the critic would say something entirely different.

May 22nd.—A religious symposium in which there is plenty of hard-hitting has come my way. The book is called "Religion: What of it?" It consists of articles written by experts of various denominations, and from it one gets a pretty good idea of the progress religion is making to-day.

One of the best contributions is by Professor Molweiss, who contends that the time has come to simplify our ideas of religion, and instead of saying, "I believe in one God," etc., to say, "How far is the Essential Entity which I call Myself, in touch with the Eternal Oneness that, for want of a better name, I call the Life-Force?" My only complaint—a churlish one, I fear—is that this article is spoilt for the inexpert layman by the citation of a very large number of authorities. Surely the Professor must have known* that nobody would have time or patience to verify all his footnotes. Dame Lampeter follows with her contention that what we call sin is merely a nightmare, and only exists in our own minds. In an extremely beautiful and moving passage she announces her gospel. I cannot resist quoting:

* He did.

"Life, lived sweetly and sanely, is a perpetual effort towards higher and better things; a straining after the good which we but dimly perceive; a dedication of self to the Great Timeless Spirit of Love and Joy and Hope." A clergyman whose name I have not come across before draws a telling comparison between human life on earth and a game of cricket.

The only disappointment is a contribution by a Catholic priest, who seems—unless I misread him—to take a strange and perverted pride in the fact that his Church is being left behind in the rush of progress. He asks: "Progress towards what?" This book is the answer to his question.*

May 23rd.—I have been to see the new gigantic figures on the Merrie England Insurance Building. A friend of mine, an architect, accompanied me, and warned me that I should not be able to understand the building unless I knew something of the new theories. "To the layman," he said, "many of these new buildings are hideous, and look like lumps of stone without design of any kind." I was certainly surprised at the building. "What about the figures?" I asked. "Oh," he said, "you want a sculptor to explain them. Unless you know something of the new theories, they will only seem loathsome and crazy, as they do to me." Well, I don't know what they represented. They looked like shapeless blocks of stone to me, but I'm going back this week. I'm hanged if I'll be one of those reactionaries who damn a thing just because it isn't pretty-pretty.

May 24th.—Went back, with a sculptor, to look at the figures. He said we had done away with all that nonsense of everything having to represent something. He said these figures were simply the twentieth century articulate. "You can't go back to hansoms," he said. Then I began to see the figures in a new light. After all, there is a kind of fitness and ultimate rightness even in ugliness, I suppose.

* It is, by Heaven!

May 28th.—Mr. Garvin says we have reached a crisis in our international affairs.

May 29th.—There was something very dignified and smacking of the old world in Mr. Hugh Walpole's complaint about the way someone had reviewed one of his books. "Nobody," he is reported to have said, "minds criticism if it is fair." I do not pretend to know the rights and wrongs of this case, but I have noticed, I must say, a tendency among ordinary book-reviewers to decry the work of even the greatest literary figures of our day. One would think that a writer of a certain status would be assured of a favourable reception for his work, or at any rate, that he would be secure from definite disapproval. When we remember all that the older writers are doing for the younger, through the various book guilds, clubs, societies, and so forth, it does seem like rank ingratitude to turn on a benefactor.

Coincidences are queer things. A friend of mine got a novel accepted and published, and only yesterday I discovered that not only was the publisher's reader her brother, and the junior partner in the firm her husband, but the first review which appeared—a most enthusiastic one—was written by her uncle. Quite a family affair.

May 30th.—Town-planning is becoming an increasingly popular topic of discussion, and I have just been reading an essay in which the writer pleaded for bolder measures, and appealed against the insipid sentimentality which obstructs all reforms by crying out against the demolition of useless buildings. For instance, there is a well-known case of a by-pass road which cannot be built, and merely because a number of people object to giving up their homes, and moving to some other district. And I, myself, have heard of a family who objected to road-widening measures, because their garden would have to have a piece cut off it.* It

* As this goes to press, I learn that forcible measures have been taken in both these cases.

seems to me that education is the only force that can combat this spirit, by creating a civic consciousness.

As for town-planning, I would have committees elected all over England. Each Committee would send a representation to put its ideas before a central sub-committee, who, in turn, would submit the ideas to the Grand Central Committee, composed of leaders in the world of business and commerce. This Committee might possibly appoint a Commission to travel about England, inquiring into local conditions, and setting up local sub-committees to deal with questions of special importance. The Commission would publish a report at the end of a stated time, and then the work could be commenced.

It is only when one looks at the small model villages and larger estates and settlements which have arisen, after careful planning, all over England, notably on the South Coast, that one realizes what can be done by our modern architects and surveyors, and by the tireless building syndicates.

May 31st.—I cut this out of my paper this morning, because it seems to me to be an excellent example of the tyranny of the censorship in the Irish Free State :—

A case has been brought to our notice* which, it if were not true, would be too fantastic to be believed. It appears that an English gentleman, who had gone to the West of Ireland for a fishing holiday, asked at the nearest library for a copy of Mr. Aldous Huxley's latest book. He was astonished to learn that the book had been banned, and found it difficult to believe that the librarian had not got a copy on the sly. He asked what the natives did about it, and was told that there was no demand for it in the neighbourhood. Now, the fact that there is no demand for such a book is bad enough, but the fact that, even if there were a demand, there would be no supply to meet it, is far worse. The whole incident is more like a story from the illiterate Middle Ages than a chronicle of actual happenings in an enlightened epoch. If the Irish would rather till an ungrateful soil than improve their minds, that is their look out, but they really must not expect cultured English gentlemen to continue their visits.

* Probably by Mr. St. John Ervine.

Literary Notes

THERE are rumours in the publishing world of a new Book Society. Apparently some of the booksellers have approached the publishers with the suggestion that profits might be kept inside the trade. The Book Society, purchasing in thousands, gets its books cheap; wouldn't it be better, the argument runs, if this job of selection were done by the trade itself rather than by outsiders?

* * *

¶ The motive is easy enough to understand. The late Sam Lewis, the eminent Jewish moneylender, lost tens of thousands of pounds at Monte Carlo, and however much he lost he always went back. When asked why, he replied that he could not bear to see all those shiners lying about without having a grab at them. This, doubtless, is the opinion of the booksellers who are proposing the Trade Book Society. All the same, I don't believe that the scheme is workable, and were it workable, I am not sure that it would be desirable.

* * *

¶ There are great constitutional difficulties. Patently, if all publishers and all booksellers came in as individuals or individual firms, on the League of Nations basis, leviathan being the equal of the minnow, there would be little in it for anybody and friction would be inevitable between the great and the small. The job could only, practically, be done by corporate bodies representing the publishers and the booksellers, and making profits for their corporate selves.

* * *

¶ Suppose this were done, and the whole persuasive power of the bookselling trade brought to bear on the public. There is no reason why it should not be so brought to bear. The notion that Book Societies reduce ordinary book shop sales has been completely blown

upon, both here and in America; choice by a Book Society is an excellent advertisement for a book. Why not, indeed! for it means (1) that a committee has decided that some thousands of people will accept the book without kicking, and (2) that some thousands of people, if they like it, will talk about it. What will happen?

* * *

¶ Well, it would be possible (one supposes) to attain the degree of success that the present Book Society has attained, and no more. Were that achieved there would be a certain amount of duplication, or competition for the same book, and no great harm would be done to literature, and there would be precious little loot to spread over the publishing and bookselling trades. But suppose a really great success; suppose that, instead of the humble thirteen or fourteen thousand members of the present Book Society, a membership of fifty or a hundred thousand were obtained? It would be difficult to manage on the basis of taking back, and exchanging, unappreciated books. But, if run on any other lines, it would certainly not be conducive to the spread of good literature. There is no very enormous half-baked or æsthetically snobbish public in this country; and the moment you reach a large public rubbish is wanted and there is no pretence that anything but rubbish is wanted. Even the present Book Society, with its restricted membership, has a strong bias in favour of fiction, though it does, occasionally, venture to supply its members with a book like "Bengal Lancer," in which the fact is as strange as fiction. But a much larger society could not dare ever to "choose" anything but fiction, and fiction with a general popular appeal. The irresistible drag would be towards sensational and sentimental fiction; and, goodness knows, there is quite enough of a premium on that already. Probably, however, the scheme will break down, and even if it does not it is not likely that there are enough people in England willing to have their

books served out to them monthly by a committee to make it a success.

* * *

¶ In Mr. Michael Sadleir's life of the first Lord Lytton there are some very amusing and instructive passages about the decade after Waterloo from which we learn that almost every feature of contemporary post-war life (including the crowding of places where money is luxuriously spent by people who complain that nobody has any money) was anticipated a hundred years ago. There is no close parallel in literary life; but there was, though not immediately, a slump in literature after the Napoleonic wars, our ancestors' fatigue expressing itself in sentimentality as ours in cynicism and flippancy.

* * *

¶ To the historian the ten years after the Great War will appear as years during which the durable and serious works were mostly written by elders and by young and gallant survivors of the war, and the really young were dilettante or disillusioned. The tide is at the turn, both with authors and with public. Mr. Priestley's success with novels in the Dickensian mode, full of genuine emotion, robust humour, and the quirks of English character, accepting life rather than protesting against it, were like the "All-clear" signals which used to announce to us the departure of an Air-Raid. Every year now the novels tend more and more towards the old normal; the *jeune feroce* is now *vieux jeu*—and not only in the novel. Beyond this, in generalization, I hardly like to go; it is difficult to be sure about trends in the complicated society around one, especially since one is involved in them oneself and has one's human desires. But if there is not, in the broad philosophic sense, a "Conservative reaction," "I, for one, will eat my hat," as I once heard an enthusiastic speaker say. These movements always begin in the centre and take time to spread. By the time that Mr. Shaw, Mr. Wells, Lord

Russell, *et hoc genus*, have reached the outer suburbs and the chemist's wife in Llandudno the sort of young people who originally took them up have long ago discarded them.

* * *

¶ The Dean and Chapter of Exeter are about to publish (at eight guineas to subscribers) a limited facsimile edition of the "Exeter Book." This is a memorable event, as the book, which is kept in the Cathedral library, is one of the four great codices of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the only one not hitherto reprinted. It was acquired by Bishop Leofric, who died in 1071, and it is memorable as containing not merely Cynewulf's "Christ," but miscellaneous poems, including a lovely lyric which deserves to open every English anthology. In point of rhythm and sentiment it might have come from any English age. The late Charles Scott-Moncrieff translated it in the original metre. This is the way of it :—

Was deep beyond plumbing the passion of Geat
So that love-sorrow him of his sleep all robbed.
That overpassing, this also may.

Theodoric governed thirty winters
The Maerings' burgh; to many 'twas known.
That overpassing, this also may.

In the final stanza the bard records the loss of his job, and ends with the same consolatory refrain.

PETER PIPER.

Reviews of Books

THE LIFE OF FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH, FIRST EARL OF YPRES
By his Son, MAJOR THE HON. GERALD FRENCH. (Cassell. 15s.)

FOR a son to write the biography of his father is always a difficult and delicate task, surrounded by pitfalls that can only be avoided if he possesses a rare sense of proportion, the power of detachment, and an acute historical conscience. The admiration which Major French shows for his father, his zeal to uphold that father's memory against all critics and historians, form a notable tribute to the affection that existed between them, besides being testimony to those endearing traits which Lord French unquestionably possessed. But undiscriminating affection is not an adequate foundation for the biography of a prominent historical figure.

A task which is no less difficult to compass, and more difficult to avoid, is that of contributing a preface. This biography has two. That by Marshal Joffre is an object lesson in the art of saying as little as possible in the pleasantest way. Lord Allenby's is a contrast. It is an indirect testimony to his own forthright character, and leaves the reader with the feeling that if he had not sincerely felt the esteem which glows through his words, he would not have consented to write a preface. But this also suggests that he has given little time to studying the records of the war, and has been too quick to translate his cavalry spirit into the field of history. The reader can only gasp when Lord Allenby unreservedly declares that "filial affection has not been allowed . . . to warp historical accuracy" and that "Major French has given us an exact and impartial biography." To crash through strongly established historical fences in this way inevitably leads to a bad fall.

He might have taken warning from the list of works which the biographer acknowledges as sources. For there is scarcely one which could be counted as a safe basis for history. They include, for example, serial publications produced as the war was in progress to meet a popular demand. Similarly, the many tributes to Lord French's generalship that are quoted are almost entirely of a date contemporaneous with his period of command. They comprise formal Parliamentary eulogies, editorials in popular newspapers, and congratulatory letters from ecclesiastical dignitaries and women friends—written during the period 1914–15. These cannot seriously be considered as historical evidence. There is much significance in the absence of authoritative post-war comments, that might have been made when historical research had begun to disperse the haze. The reason, of course, is the general discount which Sir John French's reputation has suffered, first through the publication of his own book "1914," with its quickly exposed inaccuracies of fact, and then through

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the revelations contained in a succession of matured historical works. As these were headed by the Official History itself, compiled by General Edmonds, under the auspices of the Committee of Imperial Defence, it is as foolish as it is ineffective on Major French's part to brush aside all criticisms as the product merely of "spite," "jealousy," or "ignorance."

It is possible that there is a case to be made out for Sir John French's tenure of command, but if so, the only useful way to serve his memory was to recognize the grounds of criticism and to deal concretely with the various points at issue. In contrast, here is a sample of Major French's method :—

> "It has, I believe, been alleged by some journalist or other in the guise of an official historian, that my father's book contained exaggerations or misrepresentations in regard to the battle of Le Cateau. . . . I do not propose, neither is it necessary, to go further into the matter. I will, therefore, content myself with saying that posterity will prefer to accept the verdict of the experienced soldier who, as Commander-in-Chief at the time of the battle, was in the best possible position to judge . . ."

How simple it would be if every defendant in a court of law was recognized as the only person qualified to give the verdict for or against himself!

Major French is certainly content to accept Lord French's "1914" as both evidence and verdict. For his narrative of the war is little more than a string of paraphrases or quotations from it. He even believes so firmly in the infallibility of Lord French's first thoughts that he ignores the corrections made in the second edition.

The story of Lord French's earlier career owes rather more to the biographer, and is more illuminating, save that it skips over in a single page the significant last phase of the South African War, where French came under criticism and had his original clash with Kitchener. After the South African War he was still an ardent believer in training cavalry for shock action.

The account of his early life as a sailor is most interesting, and partly told in words that he penned himself as the first instalment of an autobiography that was never completed. But numerous extracts from his diary in the World War are given, and form the most valuable part of the volume, although they are regrettably incomplete for the critical phases of 1914. In 1915 they serve to refute the biographer's own most unhistorical claim that French never had a serious difference of opinion with Joffre after the first month of the war. They reveal, to the good, French's early awakening to the need for munitions, if also his readiness to see Smith-Dorrien in a bad light long before he seized a bad excuse to get rid of him.

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also throw light on his efforts, nevertheless, to prevent troops being taken away from his command for use in more hopeful theatres. And in regard to the bitter controversy over the time the reserves were handed over to Haig at Loos, they afford decisive evidence that French's despatch stated what was quite definitely untrue.

B. H. LIDDELL HART.

LAST AND FIRST MEN. By W. Olaf Stapledon. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

THIS book is worth reading, and therefore exceptional. Though it has been damned by unfaint praise, victimized by literature's organized enemies, the blurb-writers ('As original as the solar system': Mr. Hugh Walpole), it is none the less a lucid and logical attempt to describe man's detailed future, near and far—his fate, immediate and ultimate—and, as such, it is of real interest to man in his present: to each of us here now.

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As art this logician's romance has no pretensions, marred too by its rather tiresome paraphernalia of Preface, then Contents, then Introduction; its chapters and sub-chapters, its diagrams, its atonal style. The word "sexual" occurs much too often, glittering for English eyes on almost every page, sometimes eleven times a page.

As prophecy, however, it is good. Though in the earlier part of the chronicle the treatment seems too narrowly political, and in the later parts too exclusively biological, though nowhere is the heart of the mystery touched or even apprehended, this is yet as circumstantial—and as possible—an account of the destiny of our animal species as has been written; based on reason and a gift for clear thought (working faultlessly within its own narrow limits), eked out by an accurate and unfailing power of invention that can ring continual changes on the changeless march to doom.

If of the religious-mystical reality there is nothing, of the political-sociological illusion there is much. Left and Right may both find much to please them, and displease. The futility of national and nationalist feeling and achievement, the triviality of the causes that bring war, are admirably displayed, without over-emphasis or suspect glee. On the other side, and more fundamentally, the futility of 'Progress' and the arch-triviality of man's attempts to tinker with his fate are implicit and explicit throughout the whole story. They are the story.

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THIS is the second of a series of three volumes, the first of which was "The Learned Knife"; for the third we are promised a discussion of "modern religious tendencies." In this book, which is clearly thought out and well written, Mr. Hyde establishes himself as a brilliant and thoroughgoing critic of critics; he might be described as a potential leader of the second, or perhaps the third, generation of humanists; and in these days of dog-eat-dog in the criticism of literature and life, that is no small promise. He is concerned with such writers as Benda and Fernandez in France; E. R. Curtius in Germany; Babbitt and More in America; and Wyndham Lewis, Fausset, Murry, Read, McEachren and myself in England; but chiefly, and quite rightly, with the ideas of Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Middleton Murry.

The book falls into three parts. In the first, Mr. Hyde analyses the positive doctrine of Mr. Irving Babbitt. He is quite right to ignore, for his purpose, both Mr. More, who cannot be classified as a "pure" humanist, and the young disciples of Mr. Babbitt, most of whom have succeeded only in ossifying the more vital and flexible ideas of their master. The first and third parts of the book are closely parallel; and to my mind the author makes a very good job of demonstrating the inconsistency and inadequacy of both doctrines, the purely human, and the more ambitious "naturalism" of Mr. Murry: their inconsistency with themselves, and their inadequacy to the religious instincts of humanity. Mr. Hyde's double success is all the more remarkable for his genuine sympathy with both of two writers so opposite in sensibility, and for his admirable temperateness and indifference to mere debating points. He is the first critic, so far as I know, to point out the affinity of Mr. Murry with Mr. Santayana.

It is, however, the second part of the book which seems to me the most original. The author is partly occupied with Mr. Clive

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Bell, as a typical "high-brow" and æsthete; but the section is more important for the author's general observations than for his critique of the aesthetics of Mr. Bell. It is really Mr. Aldous Huxley who should be the most conspicuous figure in this part of the book, for, as Mr. Hyde is quite well aware, it is Mr. Huxley who has made the clearest and most conscious statements of the disease of intellectualism which Mr. Huxley himself exhibits. What Mr. Hyde gives is really a diagnosis of the meaning of *culture* in modern life, of its limitations and of its spiritual dangers; it is accordingly an account which every cultivated or "civilized" person ought to read and ponder.

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>
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to experiment with democracy? History will be amazed at some of the political altars of our worship; and it will give Mrs. Webster the credit which is her due for perceiving and disclosing their rotten foundations.

A sense of humour, as the author observes, saved the country in the General Strike; it will also save us from Socialism if the performances of its exponents and pink allies are followed with attention. We find, for instance, that Mrs. Besant misdates an event of Indian history by a trifle of three thousand years, that Mr. Wells is wrong by half a century about the beginning of the "United States of Europe," and that Mr. Lloyd George thought Kharkoff was a person instead of a place. We are reminded, also, of what our present Prime Minister did in the Great War; of the famous Leeds Conference in 1917, at which Messrs. MacDonald and Snowden, together with a group of violent revolutionaries, called upon us "to follow Russia," and that "When it comes to taking action the Labour Party's line of conduct is always indistinguishable from the Communists."

Mrs. Webster's record of Bolshevik intrigue in England would be extremely amusing if the consequence of our carelessness had not been so tragic. She describes how Chicherin and Litvinov were allowed into England in the early days of the war, and how they engaged in revolutionary activities; she discovers the histories of Rothstein, Krassin, Klishko, Kameneff; and she recalls how Francis Meynell brought Russian diamonds into England in chocolate creams and in his mouth for the support of the *Daily Herald*, while Mr. Lansbury was denying as "a filthy lie" the report that that newspaper was subsidized. The departure of the Arcos delegation from this country is thus described:

> "Messrs. Rosengoltz and Khinchuk, driving up in their magnificent Rolls-Royce decorated with the sickle and hammer, found both Socialists and Communists assembled to speed the parting guests. Mr. Rosengoltz received a hearty greeting from Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Lansbury was kissed on both cheeks by Mr. Meisky, while Mr. Saklatvala hovered round armed with red poppies. As the train drew out of the station, the 'Red Flag' and the 'Internationale' were sung by both groups at the same time with painful effect."

There is more in these pages than can be noticed in a short review, or assimilated in a single reading, for, besides Russia, Mrs. Webster treats of Ireland, India, China, Egypt, Zionism, and many other matters. It is a "die-hard" book, which will be decried by sentimentalists and neglected by those who shrink from unpleasant truths; but it is by a die-hard with industry and imagination, whose indictment of our policies is clear, accurate, uncompromising, and on the whole unanswerable. It is a purge for confused thinkers, and a tonic to those who are working for sanity and self-respect in government. F. YEATS BROWN.

NEW DISCOVERIES RELATING TO THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN. By SIR ARTHUR KEITH, M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.S. (Williams and Norgate, Ltd. £1 1s.)

IN the last decade many notable additions have been made to our knowledge of the physical characters and lines of development of early man. They begin with the discovery of Rhodesian man in 1921 and culminate in the revelation of Peking man—a find of transcendent importance—whose existence, inferred from the discovery of a few teeth and fragmentary bones, was finally confirmed by the recovery of two skulls, one in December, 1929, and the other in July, 1930, from fossiliferous deposits in the cave of Chou Kou Tien near Peking. If anthropologists no longer seek the "missing link," in the sense in which that cant cry was raised in the early days of Darwinian controversy, these discoveries bring them appreciably nearer a clear comprehension of the relations between the various early types of man and of the origin of modern man. They guide us to a more precise conception of man's ancestral tree. But man's place of origin is still to seek; and, indeed, when the archæologist brings the earlier phases of human culture under review the range of possibilities seems to widen rather than contract.

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A few years ago, Dr. Aleš Hadlička, the well-known American anthropologist, in the course of a study of the teeth of prehistoric man, threw out the interesting suggestion that the place of origin of man might well prove to be in Europe rather than in Africa or Asia, to which it would be in the estimation of most anthropologists more profitable to look for evidences of the early stages of human evolution. Among other considerations which influenced him, such as the discovery of so early a type as Piltdown man and the frequency of Neanderthal man in Europe, Dr. Hadlička had in mind the fact that the oldest products of

man's handiwork have been discovered on this continent. He referred more particularly to the pre-palæolithic and palæolithic industries found by Mr. J. Reid Moir in East Anglia.

This argument would hardly apply with equal force at the present moment. One of the most striking features of recent progress in the study of prehistoric archæology has been the extension and consolidation of our knowledge of the culture of early man outside Europe. In China, in India, in South and East Africa and in Palestine not only have discoveries recently come at a pace which might almost be deemed disconcerting; but a careful study of typology and the evidence of stratification in the light of geology and, lately, of meteorology, would make it appear that we are perhaps within measurable distance of an almost world-wide correlation which, when certain allowances have been made for local variation and differentiation, will bring the early stone age industries of Africa and Asia within the chronological and cultural framework which archæologists have worked out for palæolithic man in Europe. Recently, indeed, Mr. Reid Moir in a study of stone implements found by Sir Flinders Petrie in Southern Palestine, not only concluded that they were of pleistocene age, notwithstanding the absence of any geological evidence from stratification; but he boldly hazarded a suggestion, as a result of his study of form and evidence of age, that there is a unity of culture in the early stone age, or lower palæolithic extending from England to, at least, India and stretching out as far as South Africa; and further that it is contemporary at any rate in so far as it is to be dated to the early pleistocene period which in geological time opens the quaternary epoch in which we now are.

When we turn to recent discoveries of the skeletal remains of early man it is the same story. By far the larger and more important proportion of the finds of recent years have come from outside Europe. The record of discovery between 1925 and 1930, through which Sir Arthur Keith guides his readers is truly remarkable. A mere list would be tedious. Every quarter of the globe is here—Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and even America. America has not hitherto been able to make good her claims to an unquestioned example of man of pleistocene age; but Sir Arthur Keith would now be disposed to accept a female Australoid skull from quaternary strata in Ecuador, though he is hard put to it to account for her occurrence there.

Although Sir Arthur Keith devotes the first six chapters of his book to the Taungs skull, *australopithecus*—chapters which are a model of lucid exposition of a difficult and technical subject—this South African anthropoid, as it must now be regarded, though at first loudly proclaimed as "the Missing Link," is by no means the most important topic in the book. Pride of place

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EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE

must be given to Peking Man, *Sinanthropus*. This discovery has yielded a new type of man; and Sir Arthur Keith gives it as his reasoned opinion that it is the early pleistocene ancestor of modern man for whom anthropologists have been looking for so long. He finds in it affinities with Java man, Neanderthal man, and modern man. Professor Elliot Smith, on the other hand, while recognizing these characters, stresses rather its relation to Piltdown man, regarding the two skulls as mutually illuminating and with *pithecanthropus* revealing with some probability the characters which might be expected in their hypothetical common ancestor—the man of the Tertiary geological epoch.

Both Piltdown man and Java man are of uncertain age, though now both usually assigned to the early Pleistocene. The age of Peking man is known with certainty. The cave in which the remains were found is filled with deposits containing innumerable fossilized remains of a large number of animals now extinct. Père Teilhard du Chardin, the well-known French geologist, whose authority is universally recognized, has shown in a recent contribution to a French scientific journal, that these deposits are unquestionably of early pleistocene age. In years, Sir Arthur Keith tentatively suggests an age of 250,000 years. In all probability this is too little.

Reluctantly we must forgo further reference to many important relics of early man of which Sir Arthur Keith demonstrates the significance with his customary consideration for a lay public unfamiliar with the technicalities of anatomy. His interpretation of his material carries us a long stage further towards an understanding of the course of man's development. At the same time it leaves us with a stronger conviction of the complexity of the characters which combine in the making of modern man.

E. N. FALLAIZE.

AN ADVENTURE: with a Preface by EDITH OLIVER and a Note by J. W. DUNNE. (Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d.)

TWENTY years ago two ladies who visited Versailles decided to go on to Trianon, but the Trianon which they proceeded to explore was not the Trianon of 1911 but the Trianon of 1789. The physical surroundings, as they subsequently discovered, were those of the eighteenth century. They met people wearing uniforms which are no longer worn to-day, and they saw a lady whom they now believe to have been the unhappy Queen Marie Antoinette.

The story, which was first published in 1911, attracted great attention and would probably have been treated with even greater respect had the authoresses written under their own name, for even the most sceptical of critics would hesitate to impute falsehood to Miss Anne Moberley, the daughter of Dr. George Moberley formerly Headmaster of Winchester and

later Bishop of Salisbury, and Miss Jourdain, who succeeded Miss Moberley as Principal of St. Hugh's College, Oxford.

"An Adventure" has now been re-issued with corroboratory detail. During the years which have intervened the authors have devoted much of their spare time to research, research which has tended in a most uncanny fashion to corroborate every detail, human and geographical, of their experience. Documents bearing on this story were deposited in the order in which they were accumulated at the Bodleian. The fact that these researches were subsequent, and not prior to, the adventure in question is proved not only by the character of the ladies in question but also by the entries in the *Archives Nationale* and *Bibliothèque Nationale* at Paris. Miss Jourdain on all her visits to these institutions had to sign her name and give the date of her visit.

The present reviewer, who is familiar with the literature of Physical Research, has no hesitation in describing this book as the most remarkable and the most convincing record of supernormal experience that has come his way. The book is a challenge to orthodox science, a challenge which orthodox science will be wise to ignore. Every attempt to suggest a rationalistic explanation of this phenomena has failed.

The book contains an interesting article by Mr. J. W. Dunne, whose "Experiment in Time" is an explanation of these phenomena in accordance with the principles of "serialism."

ARNOLD LUNN.

THE ENDLESS ADVENTURE. By F. S. OLIVER. Vol. II. 1727–1735 (Macmillan. 15s.)

MR. OLIVER disclaims the title of historian; his book is merely "a commentary on events which history has already accepted." Unfortunately no adequate history of the reigns of George I and George II exists and Mr. Oliver himself is very far from having mastered even the published sources of information. Thus, in the opening pages of this volume, which covers the period of George II's first Parliament, we find the following account of George II's suppression of George I's will: "The contents were never made known. . . . It gratified his resentment as well as his avarice to retaliate upon his father's legatees. In any case he considered that these testamentary matters were a private family affair." Now the contents of the will are known. It was suppressed not in order to avoid payment of legacies but as an illegal attempt to dissolve the personal union of England and Hanover. So far from regarding it as a private family affair, George II referred it to his English and Hanoverian Governments, consulted Cardinal Fleury, and acted on their unanimous advice. In other words, Mr. Oliver repeats an ancient and baseless libel on George II which is incidentally

symptomatic of a total failure to appreciate the importance of the dual position of the first two Hanoverians for the purpose of any estimate of the part which they played in English politics. To take another example: in describing the general election of 1734 Mr. Oliver says that Walpole "left the general conduct of English elections to the Duke" of Newcastle, "the Schnadhorst of this conflict." To confuse Newcastle's electioneering activities with the First Lord of the Treasury's function of "choosing a new Parliament" is not merely an error of fact; it shows a misunderstanding of the 18th century political system. The book is readable and its judgments are usually sensible, but *au fond* it is only another excursion on the endless adventure of writing history from inadequate materials.

ROMNEY SEDGWICK.

ENGLISH TRADE IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By L. F. SALZMAN. (Clarendon Press. 12s. 6d.)

IN this, a companion volume to his *English Industries of the Middle Ages*, Mr. Salzman deals with currency, credit, weights and measures, towns, markets, and fairs, the "Law Merchant," channels of distribution, and finally foreign trade, both export and import.

He has written a book which ought to appeal to a very wide public, for although primarily intended as a serious contribution to the study of economic history, it yet cannot fail, by its very subject, to attract the general reader who will look, and not in vain, for points of comparison with problems of to-day. The author shows how medieval rulers tackled the vexed question of Free Trade or Protection, what was the feeling of the time towards "middlemen," and the attitude of paternal governments towards the fixing of prices for the benefit of the consumer and as between merchant and merchant. For the great international fairs, centres of trade from all over the world, there can also be found present-day counterparts. But it is, perhaps, the problems arising out of the medieval wool trade that most closely challenge comparison with conditions of to-day. The most important of our exports, wool was a permanent factor in national finance, a steady source of revenue to the Crown. Closely allied was the cloth trade, and in this connection are shown the struggles of English merchants against both native and foreign competitors, and the ingenious attempts of the foreigners to evade payment of English cloth duties.

Mr. Salzman is concerned always with the human side of trade problems and, indeed, the great attraction of his survey is that, although in broad outline he has followed paths already trodden by modern economic historians, his researches have brought him into direct contact with medieval people, through

their chronicles, written for the benefit of posterity, and further, through official records of their complaints and misdemeanours, which are perhaps more revealing as they were innocent of design to present a point of view.

There is every reason to be grateful for the knowledge and skill which have presented a subject full of technicalities in a way which almost entirely conceals from the reader the difficulties which the author's ingenuity has overcome.

L. M. MIDGLEY.

ENGLAND'S CRISIS. By ANDRÉ SIEGFRIED. Translated by H. H. Hemming and Doris Hemming. (Cape. 10s. 6d.)

THE English technique for dealing with unwelcome ideas has never been better illustrated than in the treatment of this book. It is received not with resentment, which is undignified, or thought, which is painful, but with almost frivolous tolerance. "How well the man writes!" is the tone of most comment. "How lucid. How clever. How French." In this way, *England's Crisis* can be taken as a witty comment, instead of as a sober indictment. It is no wonder that some excuse should be sought for ignoring M. Siegfried's conclusions; for if they were once admitted, it would be necessary to abandon half the popular ideas of the day.

M. Siegfried first makes the familiar point that England's industrial crisis—the two most obvious symptoms of which are unemployment and the decline of exports—results from the absurdly high manufacturing costs in this country. It is in analysing the reasons for these high costs that he is ruthless toward many fashionable delusions. He has no respect for the famous "standard of living" of the English workman, which is used to justify the idea that a wage-reduction is unthinkable. "The English workman," he writes, "spends freely chiefly because he is not clever at organizing his life. His wife . . . has no sense of, nor delight in, economy as we have in France, and therefore she requires higher wages to maintain a very ordinary standard. Do not imagine that the French workman, though he receives less than half as much money, lives only half as well. The English standard of living means, to a certain extent, the right to live shiftlessly without exertion, and at the same time to be well paid for doing so." M. Siegfried is almost as caustic about the dole, and indeed about the whole system of using the savings of past generations without having one thing to show for the expenditure. And in contrasting the post-War policies of England and France, he says, "In England the producer has been fleeced in order to pay the *rentier* and to maintain the workman. But the *rentier* has not profited, because a considerable part of his coupon has been taken back in taxes.

This money has been distributed to the workmen in the form of social services, and has gone straight up in smoke. In France, on the contrary, the *rentier* has been squeezed to stake the producer, who has used the money to re-equip his factories. Thus the one dissipates in current expenses potential savings which otherwise would have gone eventually into production, while the other pilfers the savings of generations in order to transform them into productive capital." Two ways of meeting an emergency, neither of them ideal; but the English way has the added disadvantage of being fatal.

It is in dealing with the political causes for England's predicament that M. Siegfried is most heterodox. "England," he asserts, "has been more contaminated than any other Western community by the exigencies of democracy." He does not primarily blame the English industrialist or business man for high manufacturing costs and antiquated methods; he blames the politicians who have made it impossible to reduce either wages or taxes and so to free enough capital for a thorough reorganization. Again the contrast with France is illuminating: "The peasant is the essential piece in the French democracy, and fundamentally he has the mentality of an employer. He hates useless expense, and he will not tolerate people who do not work. In this the majority of the English are on the other side of the fence, as is quite obvious whenever a Labour Government is in power."

As a result of this contamination of democracy, England finds herself unable to try either of the plausible remedies for her trouble. She cannot take the advice that Mr. Henry Ford gives her in his latest book *Moving Forward*, and make an immediate and complete rationalization of all her industries, for with the present confiscatory taxes there is not enough free capital. And neither can she reduce manufacturing costs by lowering wages even as a temporary measure, since her irresponsible democracy will not permit its "standard of living" to be attacked. Until a political change is accomplished, England is condemned to flounder along adopting a mean that is anything but golden. It is barely possible, however, that *Fordismus* may redeem the situation. When the new factory at Dagenham is in operation, Mr. Ford promises to put his car on the market at American prices, i.e. at about £80. If he can do this in a factory that pays a minimum wage of £1 a day, the politicians may be persuaded to liberate a little English capital so that similar results may be attempted in other industries. The arch-capitalist may yet save the Socialist "standard of living."

When M. Siegfried discusses possible Anglo-American cooperation in world affairs, he loses his detachment and writes as a Frenchman alarmed at a development that might prove

too beneficial to his rivals. He rightly jibes at the picture of Anglo-American co-operation for the good of humanity: "Whenever they talk of an Anglo-Saxon Union, they act as if it were a duty, not a matter of self-interest." But he is over-anxious to persuade himself that this Union can never come to pass, that the commercial interests of the two countries clash, that the English really dislike the Americans, etc. "Though their political watchword ought to be friendship, the English can hardly contain their antipathy for their American cousins. They rail against their accent, their manners, and their lack of culture." But immediately after, M. Siegfried is uneasily admitting, "One can foresee that their combined fleets might dominate the world, at any rate outside of Europe, for the benefit of the Anglo-Saxon powers." If this might come to pass, there is little strength to M. Siegfried's point that commercial antagonism between the two countries is to be expected. In fact, the point may be a fantasy expressing a Frenchman's wish.

HERBERT AGAR.

SON OF WOMAN: The Story of D. H. Lawrence. By JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY. (Cape. 12s. 6d.)

IF a man, walking through a fair, were summoned by a showman into a booth to see the world's most beautiful woman, Cleopatra's double, Helen's only successor, it would surprise him to be confronted by a dog-headed female. His surprise would grow as he listened to the showman explaining, acutely and exhaustively, why the wretched creature looked like that, and it would culminate as the showman ushered him out of the booth with a renewed pæan on the dog-headed female's unrivalled loveliness.

Mr. Murry, in the preface to *Son of Woman*, says his book is "the story of one of the greatest lovers the world has known: of a hero of love, of a man whose capacity for love was so great that he was afraid of it. . . . Only he can judge Lawrence who has loved as he has loved," and Mr. Murry has to go back to Christ to find such a man.

Naturally, after this, we are anxious to acquaint ourselves with this supreme lover, and hasten into Mr. Murry's booth.

The constituent elements of Lawrence's great love, as Mr. Murry sees them, may be tabulated as follows:—

1. Lawrence suffered from a "mother-fixation." He was "called upon to feel in full consciousness for his mother all that a full-grown man might feel for the wife of his bosom."

This "mother-fixation" is, in Mr. Murry's opinion, a popular modern complaint. A poem of Lawrence's to his mother, beginning "my little love, my darling," is, Mr. Murry says, "universal in its appeal."

2. As a result of this "mother-fixation," and of his own weakly physique, Lawrence was "incapable of loving a woman. It was not his fault, he was so conditioned." He was always, always dreaming of himself as "a wild, untamed, dominant male," but he had no children, and "it is not easy for a man incapable of begetting children to convince a woman of his perfect manhood."

3. His failure with women inclined him from time to time to his own sex. "The crucial physical contact . . . was, for Lawrence, a necessary and essential part of a relation between man and man." As Lilly, in *Aaron's Rod*, Lawrence "wants a homosexual relation with Aaron to complete his incomplete homosexual relation with Tanny. This he calls 'extending marriage.' Other people might find another name for it."

4. Handicapped in his love of individual persons by a mixture of the "mother-fixation," sterility, and a homosexual strain, Lawrence, according to Mr. Murry, was equally unfortunate in his search of a people or country able to satisfy his ideal desires. When Lawrence writes of "the splendid animal-bright stupidity" of the "coarse men from mountain Sardinia," Mr. Murry comments: "We have learnt to be very wary of Lawrence's enthusiasm for 'animal-bright stupidity'; it does not last. The men of Cornwall had it, the men of Pescocalascio had it, the men of Sicily had it, it did not save them. . . . *Sea and Sardinia* is a lively, and often a lovely, book, but it seethes with weak and childish contradictions."

5. In Australia, in the United States, and in Mexico, Lawrence continues to displease Mr. Murry. Lawrence puts in a good word for cannibalism, and Mr. Murry cries out in his agony: "Hideous and an abomination." He approves of a flogging, in one of Dana's stories, and so "betrays his Holy Ghost." In Mexico he dallies with blood-sacrifice, and by this time there is "a complete incoherence of the Holy Ghost in Lawrence." "Part of him," Mr Murry writes, "wanted to love and forgive; but deeper still was his longing for hatred and revenge."

6. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence represents himself as "bringing sexual salvation to a young and naïve woman; . . . it is his perfect triumph; all that he demanded and did not receive of woman in life is yielded to him. It is the supreme gratification of his male pride."

7. Finally, in *The Escaped Cock*, "Lawrence sets himself to destroy Jesus," by proclaiming as "the one thing needful," what he himself had failed to achieve, namely, "physical tenderness between man and woman."

But as we leave the booth, perplexed, bemused, in our eyes a look which seems to prelude a demand that our money should be returned Mr. Murry submerges us in a passionate invocation

to his victim: "Truly you were wonderful among the Sons of Men, and you gave the world a gift beyond price. . . . No man in these latter days has given to men so marvellous or so terrible a picture of Man as you have given. No such picture of Man existed in the world before you came. . . ."

Step this way, ladies and gentlemen. Step this way!

HUGH KINGSMILL.

NEW NOVELS

HATTER'S CASTLE. By A. J. CRONIN. (Gollancz. 8s. 6d.)
THE GOOD EARTH. By PEARL S. BUCK. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)
THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER. By RICHARD ALDINGTON. (Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.)

"HATTER'S CASTLE" is a work conceived and executed on a scale large enough to be compared to Balzac. It has been said of Balzac that his method of creation was "to select a sentiment or passion and abandon it to the fertilizing heat of his imagination so that it finally emerged as something almost superhuman but still obviously human and probable." Mr. Cronin's work exhibits a similar process. He has portrayed in James Brodie, hatter of Levenford on the Clyde, the passion of pride. James Brodie is the incarnation of pride. He judges everything according to its reaction on his self-esteem. The reasons for his pride are partly his belief that he is related to a noble family, partly his rise to prosperity and importance in the town. He is the only hatter in Levenford, and therefore enjoys the dangerous power that monopoly affords. He can exercise a capricious humour in refusing to serve those whom he considers do not treat him with sufficient respect, and gain a flattering unction from the custom of the gentry, among whom he has gained the reputation of a "character" from his massive physique and abrupt manners. When they salute him in the streets or at the cattle show he attaches to it a significance out of all proportion to the reality: and gradually comes to believe that he may one day treat them as equals. Coincident with this crescent belief is the growth of his contempt for his trade. Although he draws from it his livelihood he affects to treat it *en grand seigneur*.

He has had matters so much his own way that when a multiple hat-store opens a branch in Levenford he is too puffed up with his conceit to realize its menace. He makes no attempt to conciliate his customers, and slowly his business dwindles and his profits disappear. He begins to drink to bolster up his self-confidence, and seeks to distract himself with a woman. The degradation of his character accelerates and completes itself.

Meanwhile, his tyranny of his own family has produced its ill effects. He refuses to allow his elder daughter to see the young man who is in love with her, and she has an illegitimate

baby. Obsessed with own reputation, he turns her out of the house on a night of raging storm, and his cruelty turns his best customers against him. His son, repressed at home, as soon as he has a job abroad takes to drink and women. His wife dies, worn out by drudgery and abuse, and finally his younger daughter, whom he believes in his last demoralization will reinstate his name by winning the scholarship offered to the town, is driven out of her mind by his constant demands on her to work and work and work.

The seeds of his failure were in himself at the opening of the book. Mr. Cronin has traced the havoc caused by their fruition with unerring and imaginative insight. Like Balzac he realizes the surprising extent of the social zone which can be devastated by the influence of an unbridled passion. The principles of humanity and the laws of self-control are not the result of arbitrary decision. They are sifted from the accumulated experience of society: and if they are neglected society and the individual must suffer. James Brodie does neglect them and Nemesis follows.

Although Mr. Cronin's work is contained in one volume of 635 pages, it is really planned on the three-decker principle of the Victorian novelists. It is well to remember this at the conclusion of the first section. A breathing space is necessary before beginning the second section or a feeling of anti-climax is inevitably sustained. For the conclusion of the first section, in which Mary, the elder daughter, already far gone with child, is cast out by her father in the midst of that raging storm which shattered the Tay Bridge, is a tremendous, an overwhelming crescendo of horror and pain. The miseries of an unmarried mother have, it is true, been the constant subject of melodrama, but they are also a subject of life, and Mr. Cronin's treatment of them has a sweep and a comprehension which lifts it above the reproach of transpontine fustian. The sensibility of the reader is subjected to an ordeal he cannot dismiss as extravagant or ignore as unmoving.

In an age of mediocrity which fears to express its feeling, Mr. Cronin has dared to treat of big passions and powerful situations. I have already mentioned one. There are other scenes as dynamically conceived. The situation in which Mat, the son, on his return from India, visits an easy house and attempts to molest the woman who is, though he does not know it, the mistress of his father, and muddled by whisky fires on his father when he is surprised there, again invites the stigma of melodrama and again triumphantly outfaces it. Modern literature has been altogether too afraid of that stigma. It is suffering from anæmia. An infusion of melodrama would quicken and enrich its blood.

Mr. Cronin has great gifts. His main characters are realized in the round. They live. His subsidiary characters are touched

in with a sure hand: and the conversations of all the characters are differentiated and natural. But inevitably he also has faults. His style at times becomes muddy. He tends to a verbosity which blurs his descriptions: and in his accumulation of detail shows that he has not yet achieved the self-discipline which can discard the irrelevant though interesting matter, and concentrate on the vital and significant. His opening pages are clumsy and discourage the reader: and he is prone to accept the conventions of the Victorian novelists. But when criticism has done its worst there remains a great and moving work.

If it is a success, as it deserves to be and as I do sincerely believe it will be, I hope Mr. Cronin will not be tempted by the reward to produce hurried and inferior work. He has great powers and emotional reserves, and if he abuses them he and literature will be the losers.

"The Good Earth" has been called a work of genius. That is certainly to overpraise it: but it is an able and well-composed novel written with that cool detachment and insight which appears a peculiarly feminine gift. It records the life of a Chinese peasant from his marriage to his death, his vicissitudes, his customs, his surroundings and his rise from pittance to prosperity. The attention of the reader is early won and kept by the graceful prose and the unforced and understanding progression of the tale. But a veracious description of an existence foreign to us is always interesting. Whether the authoress would have held our attention if her subject had been familiar is a question not easily dismissed.

If "The Good Earth" is compared with "Hatter's Castle," it is observed at once that the attraction of the former lies in its supply of information in an agreeable manner. The reader lays down the book feeling that he knows more of the Chinese mentality. Its charm rests in its incidentals. But when he lays down "Hatter's Castle" it is the whole of humanity which has been illuminated. "The Good Earth" is a record of material success; and material success while it excites interest lacks deep emotive power: it is the disintegration and demoralization of the soul, the evidences of tragic waste and squandered opportunities, as in "Hatter's Castle," which awaken the fundamental emotions of fear and pity.

Mrs. Buck is detached from her characters. The authoress never intrudes on the scene. But Mr. Aldington tends to destroy the verisimilitude of the picture he is drawing by his personal bias. "The Colonel's Daughter" is the daughter of a "pukka sahib and memsahib" who believe in huntin', fishin' and shootin' (without the g's), true-blue Toryism, and treating the native rough. They have the conception of how a country gentleman should live, but lack the means to fulfil it. Georgina, the daughter,

suffers unconsciously from the conflict between the natural desires of woman and the ritual of good form. Her character is sympathetically drawn: for though she is stupid, she receives all the modicum of charity Mr. Aldington allows to filter into the story.

Mr. Aldington writes in racy language. He is never dull and his wit, though at times occupied with subjects already hackneyed for a hundred years on the music hall stage, is mainly alive. But he has failed to write a book which can be considered as anything more than an amusing boutade, because he has nothing constructive to offer. He is in a temper with all the world. His characters are distorted by his spleen. He creates puppets and knocks them down. His "pukka sahibs" he reveals as cads, his intellectuals as posing philanderers, his clergymen as moral cowards, his rough diamonds as opportunists. The gentle folk in the village are prurient gossips, the villagers are an unpleasant mixture of prudery and immorality. At one moment he is inveighing against the religion of good form because it does not allow a conventional young woman who is not attractive enough to marry to have any sexual life, at another he is recoiling with acid contempt from the promiscuous tumblings of the sophisticated Bohemians. Nothing contents him. Our first reaction, it is true, is akin to the enjoyment we feel at the neat discomfiture of fools, but on reflection we realize that even a hopeful folly is a more grateful possession than the barren misanthropy which is all that Mr. Aldington would offer us in exchange.

R. McNair Scott.